

# CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

**A MAGAZINE FOR A DEMOCRACY OF CONTENT**

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John Ball

## THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND THE HUNGARIAN REFUGEES

FIVE days after the puppet Kadar régime's "amnesty" for refugees who returned to Hungary expired, reports spread among the refugees that no more would be admitted into the United States. In particular, almost 10,000 refugees who had their families or other relatives in America were to be left in Austria. Word came quickly from Vienna:

Vienna, April 6—Austrian camp officials said today they were keeping a sharp watch for attempted suicides among the 31,000 Hungarians in Austria as many of the refugees felt they had been "betrayed" by the United States.

... Many feel they have been betrayed by America for the second time—first when they received no arms to fight off the Russians during the revolution and now again. (*The New York Times*)

The officials' concern was understandable, for during the preceding three months there had been 42 attempts at suicide, 4 of them successful, among the approximately 8,000 Hungarians living in the Vienna area alone.

It appears that the refugees' fears were well grounded, although the protests from America as well as Austria that greeted these first reports were followed by many equivocal statements from the United States Government. On April 13 the State Department announced that it would admit "limited numbers" of Hungarians in the next few months but that they would be restricted to two major criteria of selection: "Hardship cases such as those involving broken families" and "special interest cases such as scientists and engineers". Meanwhile the refugee reception center at Camp Kilmer was closed on May 9, marking in a most definitive way the end of large-scale immigration.

It is now appropriate to evaluate the way in which the American Government has dealt with the refugees: to examine what has been promised, what has been performed, and what rôle the problem of the refugees had played in the Government's reaction to Hungary's struggle for freedom.

In search of an elusive freedom, approximately 200,000 people have fled Hungary since last October. The American people, who had been warned repeatedly by their leaders that any sort of meaningful political support for the freedom fighters was out of the question, were urged to help the refugees in countless editorials, rallies, and direct appeals. The American Government expressed its concern also, in no uncertain terms. On December 21 Vice-President Nixon said: "It is obvious that Austria, the U.S. and the other free nations have done a great deal, both from the standpoint of taking refugees and offering economic assistance. . . . However I am convinced that the U.S. must do more than it has already done in order to contribute adequately in meeting the problem which has been created for Austria . . ." (*The New York Times*, 22/12/1956). Indeed, as the new year began, a major policy debate in Congress was predicted over American immigration policy in general and the Hungarian refugees in particular. President Eisenhower's aides were reported

to be urging a variety of proposals to meet the crisis, including special legislation to provide some kind of regular legal status for the Hungarians who were admitted to the United States as parolees under the McCarran Act. And,

... Major decisions loomed in the 3 following matters:

1. Modification of U.S. immigration and naturalization laws with particular reference to the McCarran-Walter Immigration Act, passed in 1952.

2. Special financial assistance to those countries, particularly small ones in Western Europe, that have welcomed the Hungarians despite great financial strain.

3. A possible increase in the quota of 21,500 Hungarian refugees now being brought to this country on U.S. military planes and ships. (*New York Times*, 25/12/1956).

What has been the fate of these proposals? In the first place, more than the 21,500 were at last admitted into the United States—the most recent figures give a total of something like an additional 10,000. For comparison, a United Nations report of the period only up to March 1 gives these figures: Britain, 18,115; Canada, 13,000; West Germany, 11,560; Switzerland, 10,325. If we consider these figures in proportion to the population of the listed countries, let alone their comparative resources, America's share is by far the least significant.

Every refugee the United States has resettled has been selected from among those who arrived in Austria after October and who remained there. Thus it has not admitted any of the 18,000 less publicized people who have taken refuge in Yugoslavia. 12,074 of them had requested emigration by February, 4,593 to the United States. But,

M. Svetislav Stafanovic, Yugoslav Minister of the Interior, said only 214 visas had been granted, and none by the United States. Unable to find haven in the West, 976 chose to return to Hungary. More than 700 went back last week, he said.

(*New York Times*, 24/2/1957)

Nor has America taken any of the 30,000 Hungarian refugees in camps in other countries of Western Europe. These refugees, who had originally escaped to Austria, had been shunted elsewhere during the general confusion last fall; no solution for them is yet in sight.

A particularly tragic irony is the case of the Hungarians who came too soon—those who fled *before* October of 1956 and who have found it just as hard to enter the U.S. as if they had been ordinary refugees. To take one "small" example: The seven Hungarians who seized an airliner in flight over Hungary in the spring of 1956 are still in a refugee camp in Bavaria.

What is the legal status of the Hungarian refugees in the United States? The refugees may be divided into 2 groups. The first 6,500 were admitted under the Refugee Relief Act of 1953, which lapsed at the end of 1956, and are considered regularly admitted immigrant aliens. Their position is broadly defined by the basic American immigration law, the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952. According to this Act any alien is deportable who "at the time of entry was within one or more of the classes of aliens excludable by the law existing at the time of such entry": in the case of the Hungarians this law is the McCarran Act itself. Turning to the section of the Act entitled "General Classes of Aliens Ineligible to Receive Visas and Excluded from Admission", we find the following two classes of aliens:

212.27) Aliens who the consular officer or the Attorney General knows or has reason to believe seek to enter the United States solely, principally, or incidentally to engage in activities which would be prejudicial to the public interest, or endanger the welfare, safety, or security of the U.S.

212.29) Aliens with respect to whom the consular officer or the Attorney General knows or has reasonable ground to believe probably would, after entry, A) engage ... in any other activity subversive to the national security.

Therefore this group of refugees is excludable in retrospect, and hence deportable, if the Attorney General takes their activities after admission as an indication of their intentions in coming to America and believes that their political life in America is "prejudicial to the public interest".

The second group of refugees consists of the 25,000 who have been admitted as "parolees" under the McCarran Act. The sole mention of the concept of parole is contained in Section 212d5, which reads:

The Attorney General may in his discretion parole into the United States temporarily under such conditions as he may prescribe for emergent (*sic*) reasons or for reasons deemed strictly to the public interest any alien applying for admission to the US, but such parole of such alien shall not be regarded as an admission of the alien and when the purposes of such parole shall, in the opinion of the Attorney General, have been served, the alien shall forthwith return or be returned to the custody from which he was paroled and thereafter his case shall continue to be dealt with in the same manner as that of any other applicant for admission to the United States.

As is obvious from the wording of this paragraph, the parole provision of the Act was not devised for mass immigration. It seems to have had the original function of allowing sick persons to enter the U.S. temporarily for medical treatment, since such people are otherwise inadmissible—on grounds of health.

One of the rare discussions of the position of parolees comes from the *New York World-Telegram and Sun*:

Camp Kilmer, Dec. 4—Immigration officials said the status of a "parolee" will differ from that of a refugee holding a permanent visa in these ways:

- \* He will be here for an "indefinite" stay, rather than permanently—unless Congress grants permanent status to the parolees.
- \* He must keep the Immigration Service informed at all times as to his whereabouts. Other aliens must register annually.
- \* As long as he is a "parolee", he cannot become a US citizen. Regular immigrants can become citizens after five years.

Senator Clifford Case, in urging Congress to "end the present confusion", said: "It has had its effect on parolees already here. Many who have wanted to enlist in the armed forces are unable to do so because of their parole status. There is confusion over their draft status as well, and their present impermanent status prevents the use of special skills . . ."

To remove a parolee from the U.S. is not considered the deportation of an immigrant, but the exclusion of someone applying for entry from another country. They are thus subject directly to sections 27 and 29 quoted above. Furthermore under section 235c,

If the Attorney General is satisfied that the alien is excludable [under sect. 212, 27-29 or 212a] on the basis of information of a confidential nature, the disclosure of which the Attorney General, in the exercise of his discretion, and after consultation with the appropriate security agencies of the government, concludes would be prejudicial to the public interest, safety, or security, he may in his discretion order such alien to be excluded and deported without any inquiry or further inquiry by a special inquiry officer.

Whether or not the parolee remains in the U.S., therefore, is effectively at the "discretion" of the Government. That this discretion has already been exercised is indicated in the *New York Times* article datelined Washington, January 25: "The third refugee held to be 'subversive' was sent back today. Pressed as to what 'subversive' meant in regard to the Hungarian refugees Mr. Swing [U.S. Commissioner of Immigration & Naturalization] commented: 'Their subversive activity was such that we decided they were better out than in'."

The American Government came to rely on the parole procedure as the basis of admissions when it with great publicity simplified its security checks in Austria. In exchange for being able to enter the United States more easily than the regular alien, the parolee, once entered, must give up all legal rights; so that, in effect, what the Government gave with one hand it has more than taken away with the other.

In view of the singular position of the parolee, it is most striking that the Government chose this means of admitting the refugees rather than passing new legislation which would have had overwhelming popular support. On the other hand, once it was decided to use parolism, the process could have gone on indefinitely; thus President Eisenhower's statement that the Administration had "about exhausted the possibilities of the 'parolee method' . . . without some Congressional action" is without any legal foundation whatever. If admitting parolees was legal in the first place, it would be legal to keep on admitting them. But it is certainly most striking that for all its promises the Government has done nothing to adjust their status. The President himself could have overcome any Congressional recalcitrance by addressing a systematic program to a joint session of Congress with an appeal for its passage; if necessary calling Congress into special session for the purpose. Accompanied by the widest publicity, this would have amounted to an appeal from President to people. But as things are, no serious proposals have so far even been hinted as being considered, and Eisenhower's supporters in Congress, like the President, have confined themselves to expressing the most general "concern". At any rate, whatever may happen to the refugees in the future, the preceding months will have been a real probation period for them. The Government will have had an opportunity to examine their behavior with full freedom to reject those it does not want.

It is an indication of the way in which the internal life of the refugees is regarded by the United States that soon after they began to arrive all Hungarian publications were banned from Camp Kilmer as the result of the circulation of a newspaper criticizing America's rôle during the uprising. And the government of Austria has been still more blunt:

... Austria has repeatedly warned the refugees against any kind of political activity, and she made strict rulings to prevent such activity. Austria has reluctantly denied to Hungarians their right to organize themselves for charitable purposes lest one kind of organization lead to another. (*New York Times*, 25/1/1957).

... Austria's Ministry of the Interior ordered the security police today to investigate "all organizations of foreigners" whether called committees, relief services, or associations. It said that, despite recent warnings, Hungarian refugees had "gathered themselves" in organizations and misused these channels for political activity. (*New York Times*, 4/2/1957).

Nonetheless the refugees have attempted to form organizations, both in the United States and in Europe. It remains to be seen whether these groups will effectively represent the interests of the refugees and their brethren in Eastern Europe, or whether they will lapse into the patterns of innocuousness characteristic of emigré groups of the last war, confining their activities within officially tolerated limits.

What sort of activities exceed those limits? After the United States ended its emergency program for admitting refugees, the first reaction of panic was succeeded by a wave of protest that spread through the camps all the way from Ireland to Austria. This story is typical:

Vienna, May 7—Austrian policemen were called in to restore order after 2,000 Hungarian refugees had rioted this morning at Camp Siesenheim, near Salzburg.

Later, the refugees declared a hunger strike. Leaders said the fast would go on until the United States had lifted restrictions on the emigration of Hungarian refugees to the United States. The refugees plan a silent march through Salzburg tomorrow.

In a petition addressed to the "free world", the strikers said the October revolt in Hungary had failed because "promises were not honored".

By May 9 reports of support for the strike had begun to come in: "Even sick men in Camp Roeder refused to eat their lunch." "We Hungarians are prepared sooner to die of hunger than to live in the uncertain conditions forced upon us by the Americans."

Consider an organization of refugees which would not only protest effectively against injustices in their condition, but would call on the West to keep its promises to help the captive peoples to free themselves and would spread widely the truth about conditions in their homeland and the West's rôle during the Hungarian uprising. It can easily be imagined what sort of political activity would be disturbing to the Austrian (and American) Governments.

The problem of large numbers of refugees from behind the Iron Curtain has existed since the Second World War,<sup>1</sup> and the American Government and the United Nations have had ample time to demonstrate their willingness to solve it. The bulk of these refugees should be considered, in effect, political exiles. For we live in an age when merely pursuing one's own elementary human interests—merely trying to survive on any sort of human level—becomes a political act, and incurs the hostility of totalitarian régimes. We can only briefly consider, here, the still-continuing plight of some of the other, less publicized refugees. Concerning those in Western Europe, the *London Times* (before Hungary) reported under the headline "Bleak Outlook for Refugees—Lack of Financial Support":

Geneva, July 13—Mr. C. W. A. Schurman (Netherlands) of UNESCO said: 'Ineffable sorrow' indeed attaches to the story both of refugees and of the manner in which the community of nations united in our organization has dealt with their problems.

The financial outlook is bleak... In 1955... government contributions to the United Nations refugee emergency fund fell short of the target of \$ 5,549,533 by \$ 3,400,000 and if no improvement took place before the end of the current year it was to be feared that over 60 % of the planned program could not be implemented.

Where the occasion and the power to act are both present, and there is no action, it is the desire to act that is lacking.

Mr. Schurman's figures were based on the estimate that there were 250,000 unsettled refugees, presumably throughout the whole of Western Europe, who would require \$11,500,000 in the next two and a half years. Furthermore, according to the *New York Times* (31/3/1957), there are 400,000 refugees in 3,000 government-operated camps in West Germany and West Berlin alone: *Newsweek* magazine (8/4/1957) reports that 20,000 more are escaping from East Germany each month.

Until the captive nations succeed in throwing off their totalitarian yoke, the refugee problem has only one solution: resettlement. And there is no nation better able to absorb refugees than the United States, which could with great profit to itself have resettled all the refugees from Hungary. As things stand, the main obstacle to admitting refugees to America is the McCarran-Walter Immigration Act. The Act is based on a quota system that discriminates

<sup>1</sup>) But the Hungarians and other East Europeans are only a part—and far from the largest part—of the world's refugee problem. There are literally millions of other refugees in camps in the Middle East, in North Africa, Hong Kong, South Vietnam, in especially large numbers in the Indian sub-continent, and elsewhere. They are unwanted. Mass migration is familiar in history; but refugee camps are not.

against almost everybody who does not come from the American Hemisphere or North-Western Europe.<sup>2</sup> Great Britain got 43 % of the total. Although  $\frac{2}{3}$  of this quota goes unused each year, these numbers cannot be allocated to anybody else and they simply lapse. But half the Latvian quota, for example, is used up until the year 2274. The regular quota for Hungarians is 865 per year. Even the 6,500 people admitted as regular immigrants under the now-expired Refugee Relief Act simply took the places of other refugees who had been waiting even longer. The quotas are based on the 1920 census, but lest a proportionate amount of them should go to the Negroes who make up a tenth of the American people a special version of the census was used that omitted Negroes, American Indians, and other non-white persons.<sup>3</sup>

For all the promises it made during the height of the Hungarian crisis to amend the law, the Government has so far done nothing. But that is not surprising. The McCarran-Walter Act has been opposed by a great variety of groups with a great diversity of views ever since it was proposed. Its revision was part of both the Republican and Democratic platforms in 1956 and 1952. Considering this long history of inaction, one can understand the opinion expressed by Representative Walter, co-author of the Act, in the following statement:

Representative Francis E. Walter, chairman of the House Immigration Subcommittee, has said he doubted Congress would act on the President's proposals or on any other revision of the act this year. (*New York Times*, 23/2/1957).

What of that other announced objective of U.S. Government policy: financial assistance to the Hungarian refugees in Europe? The camps in Austria

<sup>2</sup> The following story from the *New York Times* (18/3/1957) is only one of the more recent of a long series. Under the headlines: "Red Gains Linked to US Alien Laws"—"Restrictive Policy Plays into the Hands of Propagandists, Italian Group Charges", we read:

The charge was made by the American Committee on Italian Migration, which asserted that the immigration policies of the United States had resulted in the disruption and demoralization of many families in Italy and Greece. It declared:

"The United States has a moral obligation to bring here as soon as possible the wives and minor children of those immigrants who came to this country within the last two years under the provisions of the Refugee Relief Act of 1953. A total of 20,153 wives and minor children were left in Italy and Greece alone with the hope that they would join the 'breadwinner' within a short period of time.

"The committee is besieged daily with many heart-rending appeals from the newly arrived immigrants. Many of them came here without their families because the sponsor could not accommodate the entire family and others because of the lack of means for transportation.

"They also came without the knowledge... that their wives and minor children could not join them for five or six years under a provision of the McCarran-Walter Immigration and Nationality Act. The problem is aggravated by the fact that, by the time the family is eligible to come here, many of the minor children will reach 21 years of age and thus be excluded from entry."

Justice Marchisio said that Representative Francis E. Walter, Democrat of Pennsylvania, who is co-author of the Immigration and Nationality Act and chairman of the House Subcommittee on Immigration, had given the Italian migration committee "repeated assurances that special legislation to reunite these families immediately 'is a must'."

Justice Marchisio said that nothing had been done in this connection to date, but that he still hoped Mr. Walter would "keep his promise and initiate legislation to remedy the situation".

<sup>3</sup> The quotas are most effective in excluding immigrants on racial grounds. An Asian is an Asian regardless of where he was born, and a Chinese of whatever nationality is charged to an annual quota of 105. Moreover, the definition of Chinese is a much wider net than most other such definitions—two out of four grandparents will suffice. (*The Reporter* magazine, 11/3/1957).



themselves are the best commentary upon it. On December 22 five voluntary relief agencies joined in a plea for funds to meet the crisis. Help for the Hungarians was lagging, and in particular the Red Cross and CARE announced that they might have to curtail services in other parts of the world in order to find money for them. This was only the latest in a series of pleas; but nonetheless mid-January arrived and Austria was still protesting to the West that prolonged delays in the evacuation of the Hungarians were threatening to overtax her facilities.

Here is an expression of the feeling of Hungarians living in the camps, by a refugee Hungarian journalist now in Britain, who gave his story under a pseudonym:

There is ever-growing unrest and a feeling of discontent among Hungarians living in the camps.

This feeling comes from their own conviction that their fight against Communism meant a moral victory for the whole Free World. The fair-minded Hungarians, and the majority are of this type, are not demanding super-rights. But they expect a well-deserved human life in a free society. (*New York World-Telegram & Sun*, 23/2/1957).

Other commentators have spoken of a feeling of listlessness and of the futility of life that grows on those subjected too long to the demoralization of the camps until it reaches the proportions of a "refugee-camp psychosis".

And the end of camp life is as far from sight for thousands of these most recent escapees as a humane settlement of the refugee question as a whole. Indeed, their number is being increased. Some Hungarians are still escaping—49 into Austria over the weekend of April 8, according to the Hartford, Connecticut *Times*. And an article in the March 11 *Reporter* says:

More sweeping official measures are under way. The Austrian government is clearing Vienna of the ten thousand Hungarians billeted there privately or in hotels by installing them in camps some distance from the city. This is perhaps a necessary precaution, for while there have been remarkably few incidents involving Austrians and Hungarians to date, the growing irritation of the Austrians . . . and the increasing desperation of the waiting Hungarians might be expected to produce incidents eventually.

The conditions that await these prospective camp residents are described in the same article by an official U.N. observer thus:

. . . Needs already exceeded supplies and there was not sufficient money to ensure the minimum requirements of food, clothing, and shelter. Even the recent effort made by the United Nations was hopelessly inadequate.

Conditions in the camps were attacked by the Rev. Fabian Flynn, field director of the Catholic Relief Services in Austria, who described the overcrowding as "morally indecent and without privacy", and said that hundreds of refugees would return to Hungary unless the Government corrects the evils of a camp life that "cries to heaven in Austria these days". (*New York Times*, 20/2/1957.) But as a matter of fact refugees have returned from Austria to Hungary. They refused to co-operate with the official Repatriation Commission from Budapest. But on their own initiative they were going back at a rate of more than 10 a day and by April 22 (*Newsweek*) "about 5000" had returned; whether this figure includes returnees from Yugoslavia we are not told. The author of the *Reporter* article, George Bailey, called the Hungarian refugee situation in general "an international scandal".

One outcome of the pressure on Austria is revealed in a *New York Times* report, the relevant portions of which must be reprinted here in full because their remarkable vagueness and confusion make it difficult to excerpt or summarize.

One [problem] is what to do with the thousands of teenaged Hungarian refugees here. The International Union of Socialist Youth yesterday protested to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees against their surrender to Hungary.

Asserting that these youths should be treated as combatants, the protest said that the Hungarian régime had accepted this status by interning such juveniles on their return and, in a few instances, even executing them. The Union said that requests by parents still in Hungary for the return of these youths could not be considered as made other than under duress. (*New York Times*, 14/4/1957.).

Whether the youngsters are being surrendered against their will we are not told. It should be noted that teenagers and even younger persons played a prominent part in Hungary's uprising, and perhaps these young Hungarians are among those whose political activity is regarded by the Austrian Government as a threat.

There are now about 38,000 refugees in Austria (*New York Times*, 9/4/1957), and about 17,000 still in Yugoslavia—besides 30,000 more in camps in the rest of Europe. Adding the U.N. and U.S. figures for resettlement and subtracting from the total of about 200,000 produces a remainder of nearly 30,000 whose whereabouts have not been given. In letters dated March 1 officials of the United Nations made another of their formal appeals to the governments of the world and private agencies to resettle the remaining refugees, calling it a matter of "urgency". They estimated that \$23,153,000 was needed to care for those in Austria and Yugoslavia alone until the end of the year. The *New York Times* report of this plea contained also the only clear answer that has appeared to the question of how much money the American Government had contributed to the maintenance of Hungarian refugees throughout Europe. The answer, for which one may look in vain through clouds of other reports of America's plans, goals, and perspectives: \$5,000,000.<sup>4</sup>

This sum may be compared with, say, the Netherlands' \$2,700,000. It seems rather small for a Government with a 72 billion dollar budget, a Government that could at comparatively insignificant cost have solved the refugee problem entirely with one magnanimous gesture. The *Reporter* article sums it up as follows:

There was a chance, beginning in mid-November when the refugee problem began to emerge in its full dimensions and ending in mid-January when the "crash program" fizzled out, to solve the problem on a grand humanitarian scale. By exercising unflinching generosity, there was a chance to make a decisive demonstration of democratic moral solidarity. Whatever may be done henceforth in the Hungarian refugee situation, the West has missed that chance.

As it is, the camps in Austria are financed by the Austrian government, the U.N., and voluntary organizations like the International Red Cross.

The fund-raising efforts of these organizations received the most official kind of endorsement. Not only were there the positive speeches of Government figures, but there was the powerful negative support provided by the

<sup>4</sup> A) This sum was contributed for the maintenance of European refugees, rather than for transporting them or supporting them in the United States. How much money the United States has contributed for these purposes is generally not discussed, and the true figures are at best concealed under a haze of contradictory reports.

B) After the completion of this article it was announced, in the middle of May, that America would make \$10,000,000 worth of food available to Austria, presumably for the refugees. It should go without saying that all such donations are highly desirable. It is no more than setting this grant in context, therefore, to note that it was made after the refugees had begun their hunger strikes and other protests against the end of immigration to America, at a time when American prestige in Austria and elsewhere was at a low point.



American Government's unwillingness to appropriate funds itself. The refugee question in general played a most interesting rôle in American political life. Vice-President Nixon himself flew to Austria at Christmas to be photographed with Hungarian children on his lap. While stories of fighting and of the longest general strike in all history were being relegated to back pages, stories concerning the refugees were featured almost daily in our newspapers. The first plane-load of refugees arriving in Camp Kilmer on Thanksgiving Day had first place in the news over the battles around Miskolc. People who wanted to help Hungary were told, on the one hand that nothing could be done, and on the other hand that the very real and worthy cause of helping the refugees was the same thing as helping the Hungarian struggle for freedom.

For example, the largest single meeting called in the United States about the Hungarian events was sponsored in Madison Square Garden in New York City by a large number of organizations on behalf of the International Rescue Committee. Almost forty organizations participated, from the Catholic War Veterans through the New York City CIO Council to the Socialist Union of Central and Eastern Europe. The meeting was held on November 8, 1956, when heavy fighting was still going on in Hungary. On November 6 a full page advertisement in *The New York Times*, distributed also as a leaflet, carried the cry of a Hungarian freedom radio station: "People of the world, listen to our call. Help us—not with advice, not with words, but with action . . .", and calling for armed aid from the West. Below, in huge letters, was printed: "STOP THE MASSACRE".

As the evening advanced, the audience heard many eulogies of the brave dead freedom fighters (who were still dying), besides much folk dancing and singing in a style suggestive at the same time of Hollywood and a Communist party rally. But no suggestion for help was made from the platform<sup>5</sup> except that donations for food and clothing were payable to the sponsoring Committee.

Finally the audience itself intervened. Their frustration found expression as they began to chant: "We want action". Soon the meeting was turned into an open struggle between speakers and audience. One could not but see here symbolized the struggle between those who wanted to help both the refugees and the whole Hungarian people, and those who were trying to turn a crisis into well-controlled, profitable, safe channels. But one felt that when it identified the cause of Hungary with the cause of the refugees, the IRC was this much right: that one could not expect from a Government that had not answered Hungary's cry for help a just and humane solution to the problem of the Hungarian refugees.

New York, May 27, 1957

*Concerning the repatriation of young Hungarian refugees discussed in John Ball's article, an enquiry made to the International Union of Socialist Youth elicited the following letter of clarification:*

14th June, 1957

Gentlemen,

We gladly accede to your request for additional information on our

<sup>5</sup>) Representatives of *Contemporary Issues* distributed leaflets calling for the American people to put political pressure on the Government to send arms to Hungary. The leaflets were well received, but when faced with this clear statement of its own announced program, the IRC reacted by attempting to prevent their distribution within the hall.

approach to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees with regard to unaccompanied juvenile refugees. Enclosed you will find a copy of our press release, giving the text of our letter and statement on the matter.

We did not charge that the Austrian Government forcefully returned young Hungarian refugees. We were, however, concerned with the fate of this group of refugees, since statements by Dr. Grubhofer, Austrian Secretary of State in the Ministry of Interior, contained passages which could be taken as signifying a policy of returning unaccompanied juvenile refugees against their will.

The closing down or slowing down of immigration facilities into several countries had and still has a demoralizing and depressing influence on the refugees, but was felt to a much larger degree by those who are here without family. Refugees below the age of 18 years felt the Damocles' sword of enforced repatriation dangerously dangling over their heads. It seems that despite the continuous pressure from the Kádár Government, juvenile refugees between the age of 14 and 18 will not be returned against their free will by Austria, contrary to the procedure by Yugoslavia, from where such refugees were already sent back to a miserable fate in Hungary. It can be assumed that unaccompanied youths above 14 years of age will be regarded as fully capable to judge their own actions and will thus be accorded, and be it only in fact, status as political refugees. Certain assurances in this sense have been given to us.

The Kádár Government claims that the parents of such young people must be allowed to take their children back. It is self-evident that any statements signed by parents in Hungary cannot be regarded as expressing the true feelings of the signatories, nor are the parents free of pressure even when making statements to foreign representatives of international agencies like the Red Cross, etc.

There still are in Austria over one thousand unaccompanied juvenile refugees from Hungary between the ages of 14 and 18. There are, furthermore, about 150 unaccompanied refugees below 14 years of age. In co-operation with international organizations the Austrian Ministry of the Interior has started to transfer juveniles from the Camps into special homes. Conditions of camps and the life there were such that the moral standards of juveniles were severely impaired. The efforts of international organizations and Austrian aid agencies and democratic youth organizations have already secured a very pronounced improvement in the situation of the juveniles.

The main task that faces the world with regard to the unaccompanied juveniles is to secure facilities for them to immigrate into other countries, where they would find pre-arranged accommodation and possibilities for their development. Places must be found for them to continue their apprenticeship or secondary school study or of starting to learn a new trade. We, ourselves, are now engaged in this effort together with agencies like the International Social Service, etc. We feel that public opinion must be mobilised in the prospective receiving countries, and are convinced that you will give your valuable help in this worthy matter.

We shall allow ourselves to send to you our Press Service and similar publications in order to keep you informed about the developments on our side.

Yours truly,  
**MENAHM BARGIL,**  
 Joint General Secretary

Sami Hadawi<sup>1</sup>

## A NATION UPROOTED FROM ITS SOIL

THE Israelis, on every occasion, in the press, on television, on the radio, in speeches, whether in the United Nations or at functions, declare:

"All that we ask of the Arabs is to allow us to live in peace and without interference in our own country, in our homes, and on our own lands."

Until recently, those who listened to such declarations could not but be impressed that the demand was reasonable and just, and no government or society should be allowed to exist if it denies such rights to a people who legitimately possess them. The wanton invasion of the Sinai peninsula by massed Israeli military units, last October, exploded the myth that Israel was the victim of Arab aggression. The Zionists were not content to "stop Nasser"—whatever that dubious explanation for their attack on Egypt may mean. They attempted to hold Egyptian territories three times the size of the present Israeli-occupied area of Palestine and for which even the pretence of an "historical claim" could not be made.

What is not generally known, however, is the extent to which Israel itself has been fashioned out of lands expropriated from Palestinian Arabs and retained by violence against claims that would be honored by all standards of justice and humanity. It may be safely asserted that the Zionists never "colonized" Palestine. They simply seized it. The magnitude of that terrible expropriation, the means employed to perpetuate it, and the disastrous situation it has inflicted upon hundreds of thousands of Arab men, women and children, is comparable to the most barbarous acts of our times. Once the facts are assessed, the Arab refugee may, in all fairness, turn to world opinion and declare:

"Indeed, all we ask of the Zionists is to live in our own country, in our own homes, and on our own lands. Kindly judge—not by propaganda but by the facts—on whom the guilt for expropriation and violence must be placed."

### I. The Land Situation before the Arab-Israeli Armistice.

When the British forces occupied the Holy Land in 1918, the Jews, who then numbered 56,000 out of a population of 700,000, owned only two per cent of the total land-area of Palestine, or 162,500 acres out of 6,580,755 acres.

During the ensuing thirty years, the Jews purchased additional land, bringing their total holdings on the date of the termination of the Mandate in May, 1948, to 5.67 per cent of the total land-area of the country.

Viewed in terms of total land-areas, Arabs owned 3,143,695 acres, or 47.79 per cent; Jews owned 372,925 acres, or 5.67 per cent; other residents owned

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35,512 acres, or .54 per cent, and, finally, state domain comprised 3,028,623 acres, or 46 per cent.

These statistics however, require certain emendations. To the area clearly owned by Arabs should be added 52,925 acres of citrus groves, other fruit plantations, irrigable land and cultivable land. These lands, settled, abandoned and resettled in Ottoman times, were held by persons whom the Sultan regarded as his tenants but who maintained with great obstinacy that they had clear and greater rights equivalent to "freehold" tenure. The right of occupation of the Arabs to these lands was derived from the Ottoman Régime prior to 1918 and had never been disputed by the Palestine Government. In fact, prior to the termination of the Mandate, the Government had decided on a policy of transferring title to these lands to the cultivators against the payment of a nominal sum representing the unimproved capital value.

The Jews, on the other hand, "purchased" from individual Arabs an additional 25,232 acres which included "registrations" in the old defective land registers to which they hoped to establish title during the process of Land Settlement operations. In many cases, however, these Jewish "purchases" could not be located on the ground, and where they could, their areas were inaccurate and unreliable. It should be explained that, *firstly*, Turkish registration of title to land was not based on a survey and was carried out in a very perfunctory manner. Areas were given only approximately, and the description of boundaries usually consisted of the names of adjoining owners, or physical objects, by reference to the four cardinal points; *secondly*, it was soon realised by the people that the land registers furnished the Government with information of value as a basis for taxation and conscription. In consequence, registration was not always sought, and when it was, fictitious figures were given to the Land Registry official, while persons liable to military service often procured registration in the names of nominees. As a result, the land registers at the time of the British occupation were both inaccurate and incomplete.

As regards state domain, this included government property, such as office and other buildings; closed forests and areas reserved therefor; roads, railway tracks, storm waterways, etc.; cultivable land over which Arabs held hereditary cultivation rights; lands reserved as the grazing and fuel supply areas of the village held by Government "in trust for the inhabitants of the village (or clan)"; and, finally, the uncultivable lands of the Negeb, that immense triangle stretching some five miles south of the town of Beersheba to its apex at the Gulf of 'Aqaba on the Red Sea. This latter territory of some 2,643,844 acres, which constituted almost half the area of Palestine, had never been surveyed. Some 90,000 nomad Arabs inhabited the area, cultivating what patches of land they could when the rainfall was sufficient, and grazing their camels and other flocks over the territory from time immemorial to the end of the Mandate without let or hindrance. The rights of these nomad tribes in this vast area were never challenged, and therefore the title of Government to the land as state domain was only "presumed".

The soil of Palestine differed considerably even within the limits of a single village, particularly in the hill regions, and the use to which certain lands could be put depended largely on the availability of a sufficient rainfall. It was for these reasons that the Government of Palestine decided on as many as sixteen categories of land for the purpose of taxation, while classification was not as rigid as it might have been since it bore no relation to capital value.

Arab methods of cultivation were still primitive, and owing to the hunger

for land, especially in the hill regions, the Arabs paid no attention to economic considerations. They could be seen engaged in the cultivation of small patches of soil between the rocks sometimes by means of a pick-axe, or in terracing still smaller pockets and placing olive saplings in them in the hope that they would survive. Many village families were able to subsist, though miserably, on such land which, according to Government standards, was classified as "non-cultivable". Non-cultivable land was defined as "land which could not be cultivated by the ordinary means of husbandry" and included land of a low productivity value, that is, land where the costs of production exceeded the gross income. Such lands were generally regarded as belonging to the inhabitants of the village (or clan) as a whole. In order to encourage the farmer to improve or develop this type of land, the Palestine tax law provided for the exemption from taxation of improvements for a period of ten years.

It can be safely said that, except for the salty hills and lands in the vicinity of the Dead Sea, there is hardly any land in Palestine which could not be utilized in one way or another as olive orchards or for afforestation. The vast areas of olive orchards and vineyards that can be seen covering the hillsides, sometimes standing in localities barely having any soil, are evidence and a credit to the tenacity and skill of the Palestine Arab farmer. It is significant that Arab ownership of olive orchards in Palestine was 99 per cent.

It is important to note these emendations because, during this period, the Zionists raised an extensive propaganda against restrictions imposed by the Mandatory Government on Jewish land acquisitions in certain zones to protect Arab interests. They accused the Government of violating the spirit and purpose of the "Balfour Declaration", and they did not relax their demands that all state lands should be handed over for Jewish colonization. The Government, on the other hand, made it clear that there were no vacant state lands which could be so assigned without prejudicing the rights of the Arab villagers, which, under the terms of the "Balfour Declaration" the British Government was bound to protect. Nevertheless the Zionists persisted in their demands to the last day of the Mandate.

The foregoing gross statistics and the Government's attitude toward Jewish colonization of state lands, clearly establish that the soil of Palestine—even where its specific ownership was in doubt—was Arab soil. To convert it into Jewish soil could only mean the dispossession by one means or another of its hereditary owners. What the gross statistics do not disclose, however, is that the Jews owned a nearly equitable percentage of the best cultivable land in Palestine. In the statistics of a soil survey of Palestine supplied to the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry which visited Palestine in 1946, the Government divided the soil of the country into three main categories, namely, First Quality Land, comprising the coastal and other plains—818,000 acres; Medium Quality Land, comprising the hilly regions and semi-desert lowlands—2,446,000 acres; and Poor Quality Land, comprising the dry eroded hills of Judea and the deeply eroded uplands and rift valley of the Negeb—3,316,000 acres. It can be safely said that Jewish holdings were located in the First Quality Land zones while the predominance held by the Arabs in land ownership was due not only to the fact that they comprised the bulk of the population, and especially of the agricultural population, but that they also worked inferior lands which Jewish farmers generally disdained.

The Partition Plan resolved by the United Nations General Assembly in November 1947, provided that Palestine was to be divided into six principal parts—three of which were allotted to the "Jewish State" and the other three

to the "Arab State". The reason for this extraordinary and unnatural division, was to include within the "Jewish State" all areas owned and inhabited by Jews even though this meant the inclusion of large areas owned and inhabited entirely by Arabs. The "Arab State" was to include the least possible number of Jews and the smallest amount of Jewish property. This pattern of justice resulted in the extraordinary grant to the "Jewish State" of 56.47 per cent of the total area of Palestine, or 3,689,411 acres of land, including the majority of the most fertile and developed areas, although Jewish holdings in this territory were only 345,964 acres, or 9.38 per cent. It also created an Arab minority of 497,000 to be governed by a Jewish majority of only 498,000. The "Arab State", on the other hand, included Jewish land holdings of 23,885 acres, or 0.84 per cent, and had a Jewish population of only 10,000 as against an Arab population of 725,000.

## II. Palestine — As a Result of the Armistice

On 15th May, 1948, the Mandate over Palestine came officially to an end, and the British troops and Administration moved out of the country. As this date drew near, sporadic Zionist attacks that had commenced earlier were intensified, culminating in the massacre of 250 men, women and children in the village of Deir Yasin, near Jerusalem, on 9th April, 1948, which precipitated the flight of the Moslem and Christian inhabitants from areas within range of the Zionist forces. Encouraged by their successes, the Zionists launched organized attacks against towns and expelled their Arab inhabitants. They occupied Tiberias and Samakh on 19th April; Haifa on 22nd April; Jaffa on 29th April; the Katamon Quarter of Jerusalem on 30th April; Safad on 10th May; Beisan on 11th May; and Acre on 14th May, 1948.

The Arab States came to the rescue of the Moslem and Christian inhabitants entering Palestine soil for the first time after 15th May, 1948. Fighting ensued for a few weeks, but ceased as a result of a cease-fire directive issued by the Security Council, after which Count Folke Bernadotte, of Sweden, was appointed United Nations Mediator and commenced his efforts to bring about peace between the disputing parties. Count Bernadotte was, however, assassinated by the Zionists in Jerusalem as soon as they became aware that his plans for peace included the return of territory acquired beyond the Partition Resolution.

Open hostilities between the Arab States and the Israelis came to a formal end in July 1949 when the last of the four Armistice Agreements was concluded between the Israelis and the Arab States of Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. The Armistice Agreements, however, contained provision that "the armistice demarcation lines" then delineated were "dictated exclusively by military considerations" and were "not to be construed in any sense as a political or territorial boundary".

As a result of these Armistice Agreements which remain in force to this day, Israel now controls about 8,000 square miles of Palestine territory, or 77.40 per cent instead of the 56.47 per cent allotted to the "Jewish State" under the Partition Plan. This area includes 782,000 acres of First Quality Land; 1,576,000 acres of Medium Quality Land; and 2,746,000 acres of Poor Quality Land. Jewish holdings in this territory are 360,941 acres, or only 7.23 per cent. Jewish holdings of land in territory of Palestine outside that controlled by Israel is 3,983 acres or 2.70 per cent of 1,476,250 acres.

The Armistice Agreements also provide for certain "demilitarized zones" and "no-man's land" along certain sections of the "demarcation lines" and



in the City of Jerusalem. The total extent of these areas is about 100,000 acres. Owing to the absence of accurate detail at the time that the figures in this Article were compiled, and for technical convenience, the extent of these zones were included in the territory occupied by Israel. The Israelis have, since the signing of the Armistice Agreements, attempted to incorporate them into the territory they now control. This attempt has led to the many serious incidents along the "demarcation lines".

As regards Jerusalem and its environs, this area was decreed under the Partition Resolution to be an international zone under the trusteeship of the United Nations. The decision of the General Assembly was reaffirmed in 1948 and again in 1949. The Holy City should have remained out of the conflict since it was neither to be included in the "Jewish State" nor in the "Arab State". Israel has not only refused to permit internationalization, but has unilaterally declared the Holy City its national capital—despite the censure it drew from the Trusteeship Council on 20th December, 1949.

Zionist designs on the Holy City took violent shape a few days after the Partition Resolution was adopted. On 5th January, 1948, the Zionists blew up the Semiramis Hotel in Jerusalem which had the effect of putting the inhabitants of the immediate area to flight. When the Mandate came to an end on 15th May, 1948, the Zionists were able to occupy the greater portion of the New City. As a result of the Armistice Agreement signed with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Israel now controls 4,065 acres or 80.76 per cent out of a total of 5,033 acres. Jordan has jurisdiction over the Old City and the Holy Places, while the Israelis control the major part of the New City.

Jewish ownership of property in the Israeli-held part of Jerusalem comprises 1,221 acres or 30.04 per cent as against 1,370 acres, or 33.69 per cent of Arab individual property. Other residents own 618 acres, or 15.21 per cent, while state domain, including roads and railway tracks, amounts to 856 acres, or 21.06 per cent.

### III. The "Seized" Arab Properties

The Survey in the preceding pages dealt with the extent of the territory of Palestine and the ownership of its land between Arabs and Jews. However, rural lands were extensively developed with orange groves, olive orchards, vineyards and other fruit plantations, while cities, towns and villages contained buildings and other installations. They comprised the homes and business premises of the inhabitants; in fact, the patrimony of an entire nation. Contrary to every sense of morality and justice all this property has been usurped and exploited by the Israelis for the settlement of new Jewish immigrants to Palestine. The extent of this Arab fortune and its effect on the Israeli economy were described by Don Peretz of the American Jewish Committee in his "Thesis" presented to Columbia University in 1955, as follows:

Abandoned property was one of the greatest contributions toward making Israel a viable State. The extent of its area and the fact that most of the regions along the border were absentee property made it strategically significant. Of the 370 new Jewish Settlements established between 1948 and the beginning of 1953, 350 were on absentee property. In 1954, more than one-third of Israel's Jewish population lived on absentee property, and nearly a third of the new immigrants (250,000 people) settled in urban areas abandoned by Arabs. They left whole cities like Jaffa, Acre, Lydda, Ramleh, Beisan, Majdal; 388 towns and villages; and large parts of 94 other cities and towns, containing nearly a quarter of all the buildings in Israel. 10,000 shops, businesses and stores were left in Jewish hands. At the end of the Mandate, citrus holdings in the area of Israel totalled about 240,000 dunums of which half were Arab owned. Most

of the Arab groves were taken over by the Israeli Custodian of Absentee Property. But only 34,000 dunums were cultivated by the end of 1953. In 1951-1952, former Arab groves produced one and a quarter million boxes of fruit, of which 400,000 were exported. Arab fruit sent abroad provided nearly 10 per cent of the country's foreign currency earnings from exports in 1951. In 1949, the olive produce from abandoned Arab groves was Israel's third largest export ranking after citrus and diamonds. The relative economic importance of Arab property was largest from 1948 until 1953 during the period of greatest immigration and need.

In 1951, abandoned cultivable land included nearly 95 per cent of all Israel's olive groves, 40,000 dunums of vineyards, and at least 10,000 dunums of other orchards excluding citrus.

20,000 dunums of absentee property were leased by the Custodian in 1952 for industrial purposes. A third of Israel's stone production was supplied by 52 Arab quarries under his jurisdiction.

The legislation enacted by the Israeli Authorities for the expropriation and disposal of Arab property in Palestine between the period 15th May, 1948, when the state of Israel was established and the end of 1955, was:

- The Abandoned Areas Ordinance, 1948;
- The Emergency Regulations (Cultivation of Waste Lands) 1948 and 1949;
- The Absentee Property Regulations, 1948;
- The Absentee Property Law, 1950;
- Development Authority (Transfer of Property) Law, 1950;
- The Land Acquisition (Confirmation of Past Actions & Compensation) Law, 1953.

In a detailed study of these Laws by the Research Section of the Arab Information Centre in New York, Dr. Fayez Sayegh summarized the provisions of these Laws as follows:

The first official Israeli statement of policy on occupied Arab property was embodied in the "Abandoned Areas Ordinance, 5708 — 1948" which was published on June 30, 1948, but which, according to Article 4, was declared to "have effect retroactively as from May 16, 1948".

According to this Law, the Government of Israel was empowered to declare to be an "abandoned area" any area or place which:

- a) had been conquered by its armed forces,
- b) had surrendered to its armed forces,
- c) had been "deserted" by all of its inhabitants, or
- d) had been "deserted" by part of its inhabitants.

Articles 2(a) and 1(a).

The Prime Minister or any other Minister was empowered, by Article 2(b), "to make such regulations as he may deem expedient as to matters relating to . . . the expropriation and confiscation of movable and immovable property, within any abandoned area".

In paragraph (c) of Article 2, "a minister empowered to make regulations for the implementation of this Ordinance" was also empowered to "prescribe punishments therein and issue Directions concerning any movable or immovable property within any abandoned area".

The Abandoned Areas Ordinance was soon followed and supplemented by other legislation, equally designed to absorb the Arab Refugees' property into Israeli economy: The "Emergency Regulations (Cultivation of Waste Lands), 5709 — 1948" of October 15, 1948, and its amended version of January 7, 1949. The latter was designated "Emergency Regulations (Cultivation of Waste Lands) (Extension of Validity) Ordinance, 5709 — 1949".

The "Explanatory Note" annexed to this Ordinance reads as follows:

"War conditions have resulted in lands being abandoned by their owners and cultivators and left untill, plantations being neglected and water resources remaining unexploited. On the other hand, the interest of the State demands that, without prejudice to the right of ownership of land or other property, agricultural production be maintained and expanded as much as possible and the deterioration of plantations



and farm installations prevented. For the attainment of these objects, it is necessary that the Minister of Agriculture should have certain emergency powers, which are conferred upon him by these Regulations."

The interpretative section of this Ordinance (Article 1) defined "waste land" as "land capable of yielding crops and which, in the opinion of the Minister of Agriculture, is uncultivated". The definition of "cultivation" displayed the same arbitrariness: "the operation necessary to obtain crops from the land by a method which the Minister of Agriculture deems efficient".

Having thus empowered the Minister of Agriculture to use his discretion in declaring a piece of land to be "uncultivated" or "waste land", without providing for any procedure for appeal from the "opinion" of the Minister, the Ordinance proceeded to specify the manner in which so-called "waste land" may pass to the control of the Government, as follows:—

2. (a) The Minister of Agriculture may warn the owner of waste land to cultivate the land or to ensure that it is cultivated.  
 .....  
 (c) *No act done in respect of waste land under these Regulations shall be invalidated on the ground that the warning did not come to the knowledge of the owner of the land.*
3. The owner of the waste land may, within 14 days of the publication of the warning, apply to the Minister of Agriculture... and submit proof that he has already begun, or will begin as soon as possible, to cultivate the waste land and that he will continue such cultivation.
4. If the owner of the waste land does not apply to the Minister of Agriculture as specified in regulation 3, or if the Minister of Agriculture is not satisfied that the owner of the land has begun or is about to begin or will continue to cultivate the land, the Minister of Agriculture may assume control of the land in order to ensure its cultivation.  
 .....
7. To ensure the cultivation of waste land of which he has assumed control, the Minister of Agriculture may:
  - (a) cultivate the land himself through workers employed by him; or
  - (b) hand over the land for cultivation to another person.

In view of the fact that the overwhelming majority of the owners of the abandoned Arab lands were, at the time of the promulgation of this Ordinance, and still are, refugees living in enforced exile outside Israeli-occupied territories, the provision for "warning" by the Minister of Agriculture or "application" by the owners (in Articles 2, 3 and 4) are practically meaningless. They are also rendered legally meaningless by the unconditional provision of paragraph (c) of Article 2.

Despite any appearance to the contrary, therefore, the Ordinance empowered the Minister of Agriculture to "assume control" of the land abandoned by the refugees—amounting to about 80 % of the land area of the Israeli-occupied territories—without the possibility of a challenge.

Between the promulgation of the original and the issuance of the amended versions of the Emergency Regulations on Waste Lands, another set of Emergency Regulations was issued. This was the Absentee Property Regulations, issued in December, 1948. These Regulations enabled the Minister of Finance to appoint a Custodian of Absentee Property, who replaced the Custodian of Abandoned Property. All absentee property was vested in the Custodian, who was given broad powers over it. All rights in this property belonged to the Custodian, and he could take over all property which might be obtained in future by an individual whom he certified to be an absentee. He could at any time liquidate absentee businesses. All businesses in which at least one-half of the number of persons, partners, shareholders, directors or managers were absentees, or in which absentees were dominant or controlled at least half of the capital, were turned over *in whole* to the Custodian.

The Custodian could take over most Arab property in Israel on the strength of his own judgement, by certifying in writing that any person or body of persons was absentee, or that any property was absentee property. The burden of proof that any property was not absentee fell upon its owner.

The crucial provision of this body of Regulations was the definition of an "absentee". Any person was declared "absentee" who was, on or after November 29, 1947 (the date of the General Assembly Resolution concerning the partition of Palestine):

- a) a citizen or subject of any of the Arab States;
- b) in any of these States, for any length of time;
- c) in any part of Palestine outside of the Israeli-occupied area; or
- d) in any place other than his habitual residence, even if such place as well as his habitual abode were within Israeli-occupied territory.

According to Don Peretz, . . . "Every Arab in Palestine who had left his town or village after November 29, 1947, was liable to be classified as an absentee under the regulations. All Arabs who held property in the New City of Acre, regardless of the fact that they may never have travelled farther than the few metres to the Old City, were classified as absentees. The 30,000 Arabs who fled from one place to another within Israel, but who never left the country, were also liable to have their property declared absentee. Any individual who may have gone to Beirut or Bethlehem for a one day visit during the latter days of the Mandate, was automatically an absentee."

Having empowered the Custodian and the Minister of Agriculture to assume control of "absentee property" and "waste lands" respectively, by virtue of the afore-mentioned Emergency Regulations and Ordinances, the Israeli Government moved one step further in 1950 in the direction of "legalizing" the occupation of Arab property and establishing a "firmer constitutional basis" therefor. It did so by passing a law through the Knesset, to replace the various emergency regulations.

Thus the "Absentee Property Law, 5710 — 1950", which was passed by the Knesset on March 14, 1950, besides confirming most of the privileges bestowed on the Custodian by virtue of earlier regulations, empowered him to sell "absentee property". The Law also gave legal recognition to the *de facto* distribution of Arab Lands, which had already taken place.

Although the Absentee Property Law empowered the Custodian to sell absentee property to a Development Authority established by the Knesset, this authority was created several months after the Law was promulgated.

The "Development Authority (Transfer of Property) Law, 5710 — 1950" was passed by the Knesset on July 31, 1950. The Development Authority was empowered, *inter alia*, "to buy, rent, take on lease, take in exchange or otherwise acquire property". It was also empowered "to sell or otherwise dispose of" property. But its power to "sell or otherwise transfer the right of ownership of" property was limited by the following conditions:

- (a) Such transfer of ownership can be made only to the State, the Jewish National Fund, certain Government-approved institutions, or local authorities;
- (b) "The right of ownership of land so acquired may not be re-transferred except with the consent of the Development Authority to one of the bodies" in the afore-mentioned categories; and
- (c) Transactions of this nature, involving the transfer or re-transfer of ownership, must be "effected by decision of the Government in each individual case".

The last major legislation in the process of "legalizing" the control of Arab property was the "Land Acquisition (Confirmation of Past Actions and Compensation) Law of 1953", which was passed by the Knesset on March 10, 1953.

This Law confirmed the acquisition by the Development Authority of lands it had already acquired, empowered it to acquire additional property, and enabled it to register in its name such property at the Land Registry—asserting that "non-registration will not . . . injure the validity of the acquisition of the property by the Development Authority".

This Law thus goes further than any previous legislation on the subject, and constitutes a climax to the whole trend of legislation since 1948, in that it finally transfers the ownership of *all* the property belonging to the 1,000,000 odd Arab refugees-in-exile, as well as *sizable portions* of the property of many tens of thousands of the Arab residents of Israeli-occupied territories who have been arbitrarily declared to be "absentees" by the Israeli Authorities.

#### IV. Valuation of Arab Property

The Absentee Property Law of 1950 empowers, in Section 19 (a) (1), the Custodian to sell Arab property to the "Development Authority" at a price

not less than its "official value". This so-called "official value" has been fixed in the Law to be as follows:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| A — In the case of property within the limits of towns, and industrial buildings with mechanically-driven machinery in rural areas. | — 16 and 2/3rd times the net annual value of the property as assessed for taxation purposes for the year 1947–1948.   |
| B — In the case of rural lands including the buildings thereon and fruit plantations.   | — If the land belongs to the categories of citrus, bananas, or village-built-on areas—300 times the amount of tax charged on <i>citrus</i> for 1947–1948; All other land—75 times the amount of tax charged on it in the years 1947–1948. |

The said Law also provides in Section 32 for the following deductions to be made from the "official value" where the property is sold or where it is released and returned to its Arab owner:

- a) A remuneration of four per cent — As the share of the State;
- b) Any expenses (including travelling expenses, costs of legal proceedings, the remuneration of advocates, agents or other persons employed by the Custodian in connection with the property) incurred for the purpose of safe-guarding, maintaining, repairing or developing any property of an absentee, *plus* interest at the rate of six per cent per annum from the day on which the expenses were incurred.

The following is an illustration of what is expected to happen to the property described below:

First class stone building with all modern conveniences standing on a one-quarter acre plot of land in one of the best residential quarters of Jerusalem, consisting of 3 bedrooms, sitting-room, dining-room, one closed and one open verandahs, kitchen, bath-room, lavatory, storeroom, and a well-planted garden and garage. Area of building 400 square feet. Owner-occupier. Assessment for tax purposes—48 Palestine Pounds<sup>2</sup> per annum net annual value.

Valuation on basis of Israeli "official value" — Net annual value for 1947–1948 LP.48 by 16.2/3 times—790 Israeli Pounds<sup>3</sup> less deductions provided for in Section 32.

The market value of vacant land in the vicinity of this house, was, in 1947, fetching a price of LP.3,000. The costs of construction of an identical building at prices prevailing during the same year would have amounted to LP.3,500—making a total capital value of LP.6,500 for the whole property.

Theoretically, the basis of assessment of property in urban areas follows the recognized "principles of valuation", and tends to give the impression that the Israelis are treating Arab property justly. There is, however, one important difference. Whereas this principle is applied to the *actual* income obtainable from the property in the open market under normal circumstances, the Israeli formula of the "official value" is applied to an *assessment* made for taxation purposes only and was never intended by the Palestine Government to represent the capital value. These assessments, however, were affected by many considerations, the chief of which were the restrictions placed on rents during the war years and the manner in which the assessments were carried out.

In 1940, rents were controlled under a Rents Restriction Ordinance which remained applicable until the termination of the Mandate in 1948. The effect of this Law on annual assessments made under the Urban Property Tax Ordinance was that values no longer represented actual values or an average

<sup>2</sup> The Palestine Pound was equivalent to the Pound Sterling (\$ 2.80).

<sup>3</sup> Official rate of Israeli Pound: five to the Sterling.

of the rental value of the property in the open market; there was no uniformity in assessments; and the whole structure of a proper method of valuation collapsed. The chaotic conditions in assessments during the period 1939 to 1948 can best be described by giving, as example, the circumstances of five identical properties in location, size, construction and maintenance as follows:

- a) Building under continuous lease prior and subsequent to the enactment of the Rents Restriction Ordinance in 1940—The building maintained its pre-war assessment throughout the period although rentals had gone up by about five times;
- b) Building constructed prior to but changed occupants after the enactment of the Rents Restriction Ordinance—This building realized a higher rental than what the previous tenant had paid, but the assessment was maintained at its pre-war level;
- c) Building leased to Government before or after the Rents Restriction Ordinance—This building was assessed at its true rental value;
- d) Building owner-occupier—The attitude of the assessment committee towards such buildings was that as the owner obtained no actual financial benefit from his property, it should be assessed at one-third the assessment of leased properties;
- e) Building constructed after the war when building material was no longer controlled—Such building was leased at the market value, but assessments for taxation purposes were much lower on the grounds that the owner had invested greatly in the construction and should therefore not be penalized by heavy taxation.

Although the first four properties may have had the same capital value, the assessments for taxation varied to such an extent as to make reliance on the tax records impossible when it came to computing the capital value.

Furthermore, the Urban Property Tax Ordinance prescribed, for political reasons, that assessments for taxation should be carried out by an assessment committee composed of two official and two non-official members. The only member among them who had received some practical elementary training in valuation was the Government official of the Department responsible for valuation who was described as the surveyor-valuer. As explained above, amounts were invariably lower than what the landlords actually received in rental, and the attitude of the non-official members was to keep the assessments as low as possible because they felt they represented the interests of the landlords versus a government imposed on the country against the will of the people. Their argument was further strengthened by the provisions of the Rents Restriction Ordinance prohibiting any increase in rentals. The Palestine Government recognized the inefficiency of the working machinery, but was reluctant to make any change by replacing the unqualified committee of four by one qualified valuer because such action it felt would have removed the only participation of the people of Palestine in the administration of the country. It would certainly have raised a storm of political protest.

With regard to lands in rural areas, it is not clear on what basis, if any, the so-called "official value" has been calculated. It certainly is not the market value of the property. It should be explained that the Rural Property Tax Ordinance of the Palestine Government prescribed that the rural property tax shall be a tax equal to 10 % of the average of a low annual income after deducting two-thirds of the assessed income to cover costs of production. Land included fixtures, such as buildings, which were ignored in the fixing of

the tax. On the other hand, land of a low productivity value was classified in a non-taxable category and remained non-taxable until the owner developed it into a fruit plantation or otherwise improved it. In such cases, the owner commenced to pay tax thereon after the lapse of ten years following the date of completion of the development or improvement. Whereas such undeveloped land may not have had an agricultural value, in some instances—especially if the land was situated in the vicinity of towns or cities—it had a high value as potential building sites. The capital value of such land ranged in 1947 between 50 pounds per dunum (\$140 per one-quarter acre) and 5,000 pounds (\$14,000).

Whereas the Absentee Property Law provides for the disposal of such property at a fixed "official value", the Development Authority Law, while empowering the Director to dispose of the property to a third party, is silent as to the conditions of the sale value. The following statement by Don Peretz explains the relation between the "paper" sale value as credited to the account of the property in the Custodian's office and the value in terms of actual currency that enters the coffers of the Israeli Government:

The amount of money involved in most of these transactions was not published; however, the Director of the Development Authority stated that the first million dunums of absentee property which he purchased from the custodian were resold to the Jewish National Fund for about 12 million Israeli pounds, which was a greater sum than he paid for it.

The United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine established in 1951 a "Refugee Office" to carry out a *global* assessment of Arab refugee property in the Israeli-occupied territory of Palestine. A "tentative valuation" was completed in a perfunctory manner within the short period of three and a half months that the Office stayed in Jerusalem. This valuation was not regarded as reflecting the actual market value of the individual properties, but was intended merely to obtain a rough estimation of the value, in the aggregate, of Arab movable and immovable property. The intention was to use this estimate as a possible basis for discussion of the Palestine case between the Arab States and the Israelis. The Arab States were not prepared, however, to discuss the accuracy or otherwise of the "tentative valuation", and pointed out that a settlement of the Palestine problem rested on the return of the refugees to their homes and property as resolved by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1948 and reaffirmed in December 1950, rather than on the sale of Arab property.

A comparison between the "tentative valuation" of the said Refugee Office of the Palestine Conciliation Commission and the so-called "official value" fixed in the Israeli law, will clearly reveal the flagrant injustices imposed on Arab property. An illustration of the differences between the two sets of figures are given in the following four examples. It should be remembered that at official rates five Israeli pounds equal one pound sterling.

	"Official value" Israeli Pounds	U.N. Assessment Pounds Sterling
Citrus Grove (per dunum)	30	80
Built-up area	30	150
1st Grade Irrigable land	12	60
1st Grade Cultivable land	7½	37½

#### V. The Zionists and the Soil

The Zionists claimed throughout the period of the Mandate that the soil of

Palestine had been neglected by the Arabs for generations, and that, given the opportunity, with the skill and financial resources at the disposal of the Jews, Palestine could become capable of absorbing an unlimited number of Jewish immigrants.

In their determined policy to acquire Palestine and to maintain the Jewish settlers on the land at all costs, it was obvious that Zionist philanthropy and enthusiasm had over-ruled the economic considerations usual in a land reclamation project. Whereas the Zionists claimed that they had been carrying out "redemption of the soil" under the most arduous and hazardous conditions, the truth of the matter is that they were actually concentrating their purchases and developments in lands always fertile and with an abundance of rainfall and underground water supply. One glance at the appropriate map of Palestine will reveal that Jewish holdings are mainly in the coastal and other plains of the country. These lands had served from times immemorial to sustain the Arab inhabitants who were gradually being pushed into less fertile soil as Jewish acquisitions increased. The coastal plain contained a flourishing Arab citrus industry which made the "Jaffa Orange" famous in Europe long before Jewish immigration invaded the shores of the Holy Land. In fact, Jewish farmers learned citrus growing from the Arabs; and although they incurred greater costs on upkeep, the quantity of fruit obtained from a Jewish-owned grove per acre never reached the extent of Arab production.

There were, however, a number of Jewish settlements in the less fertile lands of the country scattered along the borders of Palestine. These had been established in strategic positions with the obvious intent of eventually cutting off the Arab inhabitants from contact with the neighbouring Arab States. The majority of these settlements, if not all, were never viable and had to be constantly assisted financially by the Zionist organizations. It is significant that the greater proportion of Jewish-owned land in the hill regions remained fallow until the end of the Mandate except along main roads or in easily accessible areas where Jewish "rebuilding" could be seen by the visiting tourist.

Other Zionist agricultural ventures—absolutely uneconomical—were the establishment of a few "propaganda" settlements in remote and desolate areas. One example of these was the settlement at the northern edge of the Dead Sea. The extent of salt in this area exceeds 17 per cent which makes the land unfit for any form of cultivation. For six weeks running, small patches of the land were placed under water to wash the salt away. In fact, some vegetation did in the end grow on the surface but at considerable labour, time and expense, out of all proportion to the benefit, if any, derived therefrom. What would have happened when the roots of plants imported in their original soil had reached the salty layers of the earth, was easy to predict, but the settlers did not remain there long enough to realize the futility of their endeavour.

The purposes of this and similar ventures, as the settlers themselves honestly admitted to this writer, were to attract the visitor and let him see for himself the hardships and sacrifice endured by the Zionist pioneers in order to create in him admiration and enthusiasm for the "rebuilding of the Promised Land". Strangely enough, this writer attended in New York in 1956 a Zionist propaganda film depicting the soil of the settlement just described in its original condition and then showing how two years later the area had been transformed into banana groves, fruit plantations and cultivated land. The film also showed, how, contrary to the advice of the Jewish agriculture research experts that the land was unsuited for cultivation, the settlers had overcome the impossible and made the dead land "blossom". The film concluded by



indicating that at that date this settlement had a population of 500 souls, flourishing and happy.

In point of fact, the developments shown in the film are known by this writer to belong to an old settlement many miles to the north where the soil is of first quality. What the film described as "flourishing and happy" simply does not exist because the settlers had abandoned the area shortly before the Palestine war of 1948.

And so it was that on the date of the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, the amount of money sunk into agricultural development in Palestine far exceeded the agricultural achievements of the Zionist organizations. Whatever agricultural development the Jews carried out in Palestine was without consideration of cost and is therefore not so much to their credit. Had comparable financial contributions been placed at the disposal of the Arab farmers, the extent of development would have been much greater and the Holy Land could today have been described as a "paradise".

The Israelis, now that they have expelled the Arab inhabitants and laid hands on land many times the size of their legal holdings, boast that great progress in agricultural development has been made since the creation of their "state", and that they are in the process of turning the desert into a "rose garden". Such statements may impress those who have unqualified enthusiasm for Israel and others who are ignorant of the soil textures in Palestine. They are certainly far from the truth.

Before the Arab exodus, the greater part of the coastal plain between Jaffa in the south and Haifa in the north was covered with flourishing citrus plantations and other cultivation. Today, the Israelis have not only sinned against the Arab inhabitants whom they deprived of their patrimony; they have sinned also against the land—the only fertile soil in the country—which for generations had served to provide sustenance for its people. The Arab citrus groves, established at great cost and once the pride of Palestine, were reduced from some 34,000 acres to about 8,000 acres, to make room for new towns and settlements. Whereas the Arabs would construct their dwellings on rocky land, the Israelis have established their urban areas on the best soil of the country. Before the creation of Israel, towns and villages in the plains were surrounded by vegetable gardens and citrus plantations. Today, for example, the perimeter of the cities of Jaffa—Tel-Aviv, Ramat Gan, Petah Tiqva and several smaller towns which were contiguous but severed by orange groves and gardens, have now all been merged into one solid urban block. Not only has this particular locality in the south been completely divested of any agricultural character, but the same may be said of much of the coastal lands running north towards Haifa. Instead of the "citrus gardens", the coastal plain is rumbling with the noise of machinery while the hill regions often remain fallow and unattended, suffering the scourge of soil erosion.

As regards the hill regions, it is understood that this part of the country has not only been neglected, but that terracing carried out by the Arabs over the ages, was either wilfully destroyed or has been allowed to disintegrate as a result of the "get tough policy" of Israel adopted against its 180,000 Arab citizens. The Arabs of Galilee earned their living mainly from the olive orchards many of which have been there from the time of the Crusades. Since 1948, the Israelis have expropriated the bulk of the cultivable lands belonging to the Arab residents, including a large proportion of their olive orchards. To add insult to injury, the Israelis imposed on the Arabs stringent travel restrictions and prohibitions under the pretext that these measures were

necessary for "security reasons", even though the village may be located many miles from the border. Under these laws, no Arab was allowed to leave his town or village without a permit from the military authorities which in almost all cases was not granted. Another injustice involves declaring large areas "closed security zones" which no Arab is permitted to enter. The Arabs are deprived of land to sustain themselves; the land is deprived of Arab care to prevent further soil erosion.

The Israelis proclaim that they are turning the Negev into a "rose garden". It should be explained that the territory referred to by the Israelis as *the Negev* comprises two distinct localities: The first, about 575,000 acres of semi-desert lowlands with good loess soil west and north-west of the town of Beersheba is erroneously described as included in the Negev. This area is capable of being irrigated if water is available. It is understood that some of this territory has already been brought under irrigation.

The other part which is recognized as the Negev proper, is a vast area stretching from some five miles south of the town of Beersheba to the Gulf of 'Aqaba on the Red Sea. This territory, half the size of the total Israeli-occupied area, comprises some 2,386,000 acres of deeply eroded uplands and rift valleys. It is incapable of cultivation except for small pockets sporadically located in the valleys estimated to amount in the aggregate to only 90,000 acres. Even if water were available for this area, the topography makes any irrigation scheme highly impracticable.

The Zionist claim that the Negev is capable of being cultivated is therefore entirely misleading.

## VI. Conclusion

Since the creation of Israel in 1948, every approach for a solution of the Palestine problem appears to have carefully avoided the real issue. *It should be remembered that down at the bottom of the unrest, hostility and fear which currently beset the Middle East are human beings—over one million Arab refugees—the original and lawful inhabitants of Palestine. No solution to the problem will be effective, and no peace in the Holy Land will be permanent, which does not begin with a just, fair and constructive settlement for these human beings.* The Arab refugees are the key to the Palestine problem, and indeed to stability in the Middle East. They ask no favors, they want no charity. No amount of silver or gold will make them forget their homes or forego their natural and legitimate rights to their homeland. They demand the right to live, the right to self-determination, and the right to hold and enjoy their own property in their homeland in the same way that peoples of the free world exercise their rights and prerogatives in their own countries.

The question that the refugees ask is: why should they, who are innocent of any wrong-doing, be ousted from their homes, have their belongings plundered, and their lands expropriated because of their religious beliefs? What manner of justice is this that throws out one million peaceful people and robs them of everything they possess to make room for alien, albeit homeless, people? Jews have for generations suffered persecution, and the Zionists know what it means to have one's rights usurped; one's property confiscated without remuneration; to be treated as an outcast; and deprived of all human rights and dignity. To see these erstwhile persecuted people react with such atrociousness against other human beings who have done them no injury, increases their crime tenfold.

To cover up for their expulsion of the Arab inhabitants and expropriation



of their property, the Israelis proclaim that the Palestine Arabs left their homes of their own choice and at the behest of their leaders. This was not the case, but whatever the causes and reasons for the Arab exodus, the inhabitants were justified in leaving their homes for a place of safety. The Arab inhabitants were not a party to the fighting while the United Nations failed to protect them from the attacks to which they had been subjected. The inhabitants have the undisputed right to return to their homes and property when the danger is over. Even if, for the sake of argument, they were unable to return, international law and equity demand that the rights and property of the individual human person shall be preserved and respected as a sacred trust until such time as peace is restored.

Sovereignty over a country is the natural right of the people who have been born and have lived there for generations, without distinction of race, color or religion. According to modern democratic ideas, no conquest of a country by another people can deprive the indigenous population, of whatever religion, of their rights to their homes and property. The very foundation of the United Nations, as laid down in the Charter, is "in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights, and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion". Two world wars have presumably been fought in defence of the rights and liberties of the individual human person. Despite these solemn assurances, the Moslem and Christian inhabitants of the Holy Land remain deprived of these very rights solely because of their religious beliefs.

Until and unless the wrong done to the Palestine Arabs is redressed, there will be no peace in the Middle East.

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Virginia Davis

## THE BUS BOYCOT IN SOUTH AFRICA<sup>1</sup>

EARLY in January of this year the government-subsidized bus company transporting African workers to their jobs in Johannesburg announced a fare-increase from fourpence to fivepence per passenger. For the half million Africans who are forced to live in squalid, segregated townships ten miles outside the city, this increase constituted a brutal blow at a living standard already close to starvation levels. The result was a strengthening of an already widespread spirit of resistance against the Nationalist government of Premier Strijdom, whose avowed aim and every action is keeping the 10 million blacks and coloreds of South Africa as "hewers of wood and drawers of water" for the 2½ million whites in the country. The resistance became focused on the immediate issue of the fare-increase and developed into an African boycott of the buses until the companies reduced the fare to the original fourpence.

*Time* magazine of April 15th reported that for twelve weeks "145,000 Negroes honored the boycott in a demonstration of unity such as South Africa

<sup>1</sup> This is a script of a broadcast made from the station KPFA in the United States.

has never seen before". For twelve weeks the Negroes in the shanty-towns rose in the middle of the night to start the arduous 10 mile trek over the steep hills surrounding Johannesburg, returning again on foot after the day's work was over. For twelve weeks they braved nature's storms and the police violence of a ruthless white supremacy government determined to break the boycott. The Minister of Justice, C. R. Swart, announced that during the first two months of the boycott 14,000 Africans, or one out of every ten boycotters, had been arrested or imprisoned on a host of charges ranging from not having their passes in order, to crossing the street against the traffic signals between the hours of 4 a.m. to 6 a.m. Many non-boycotters were also arrested, including taxi drivers who ferried workers into the city at reduced rates and white employers who picked up their laborers. Police roadblocks searched all vehicles going into Johannesburg, creating monstrous traffic jams. Ordinances, hitherto unenforced, forbidding riders on the handlebars of bicycles and forbidding sleeping in the open, were strictly applied. Johannesburg hostels boarding Africans overnight were raided. The railways were instructed to carry only those Africans who had purchased season tickets before the boycott started.

Instead of breaking their spirit, the government's methods only enforced the Africans' determination to boycott the buses until they could ride for fourpence. The entire African population of the Union rallied in a show of solidarity with the boycotters. 550 miles away in Port Elizabeth, in Pretoria, the capital of the Union, Africans refused to ride the buses. In the white Nationalist stronghold of Bloemfontein the Africans threatened a boycott unless the bus companies removed the bus-queue marshals, men armed with whips and sticks who patrolled the bus-stops. Clearly the boycott had become a national issue which was disrupting the economic existence of the cities now cut off from much of their labor supply. More important, the boycott was forging a unity and organization among the Africans which could eventually topple the entire white supremacy system.

Before I go into the terms on which the boycott was settled, I should like to present some material on the social position of the Africans and their white masters. The material comes mainly from John Gunther's book *Inside Africa*.

The history of South Africa from the 17th century when the first Dutchmen and French Huguenots settled on the Cape to the present day involved the subjugation of native Africans for use as cheap or slave labor. The brutal exploitation of Africans assures the profitability of the famous diamond mines of Kimberley, the gold mines which yield an average of almost half a billion dollars annually, the mines of uranium, lead, copper, asbestos, coal, chrome and manganese, as well as the vast Boer-owned factory farms and cattle ranges. Back in the 17th and 18th centuries the ancestors of today's Afrikaaners, as the whites of Dutch descent call themselves, imported slaves from West Africa and the Far East, since they could not subdue the fierce Bantu tribes. But when the British captured the Cape in 1795, abolishing slavery soon afterward, the Afrikaaners' equilibrium was shattered. To be free of the incoming British and in search of new lands where they could establish their own "native policy", the Afrikaaners began the "great trek" into the fertile interior of South Africa. They met in battle and eventually prevailed over the black tribes, establishing two agriculture-centered republics. However, in the latter half of the 19th century the discovery of diamonds and enormous gold deposits, turned the two Boer republics into glittering prizes. During the Boer War at the turn of the century the British broke the backs of the two republics

integrating them into the Union of South Africa affiliated with the British Empire. More important, the war assured British interests control of the mineral wealth and commercial developments, reducing the Afrikaaners to the agricultural hinterland. Thus today 90 % of all the capital invested in the Union is British or British South African and only 10 % is Afrikaaner.

One of the first significant legislative acts of the newly-established Union was the Land Act of 1916, similar in purpose to the English Enclosure Act. It forced the natives off their own land reducing them to indentured mine workers and agricultural workers. They were prevented from owning land anywhere in the Union except on the native reserves where 3½ million people are fighting a losing battle against soil exhaustion and slow starvation. Land is so scarce on the reserves that ½ of the families have no land at all while most of the others are forced to supplement their returns from their tiny plots with outside work. In addition to the people clinging to the reserves, between 3 and 4 million toil in the cities and mines, living in insanitary, dismal shantytowns on the outskirts of the towns or in prison-like compounds if they are mine workers.

As an example of the conditions of the mine workers let us look at the gold mines in the Johannesburg area. The mines are exploited by contract labor which signs up for nine to eighteen months. Breaking a labor contract is a crime. On the average about 300,000 workers are employed at a time in this area alone. Even the most physically fit of these primitive people cannot endure for more than one year the strain of working in 100 degree heat a mile or a mile-and-a-half down in the earth. After their term in the mines, most of the laborers carry away with them a bonus of tuberculosis or silicosis in addition to their pay of 33c to 45c a day. One can understand the desperate demand for labor in the mines since the Johannesburg mines alone "consume" 300,000 laborers that must be replaced yearly. Interestingly enough, the gold ores of South Africa are low grade ores whose exploitation is profitable only because the labor is paid next to nothing. Most of South Africa's gold which totals over 40 % of world production is bought by the United States and is promptly put underground again, at Fort Knox.

In the agricultural areas about 3 million Africans live on the large-scale Afrikaaner farms where they tend the cattle, sow and harvest the crops while the Afrikaaners reap the profits. Their relationship with their white masters is a kind of serf-tenancy in which the native is given the privilege of working a small plot in return for labor on the Afrikaaners' land. More recently the Afrikaaners have found it more profitable to use hired labor and prisoners. Prisoners are housed in barracks and are hired out to the farmers who pay the government 25c a day per prisoner. This is cheap even for South Africa. As the land shortage is making serf-tenancy more and more unprofitable, the use of prison labor is becoming more widespread. An "arrested" native is in many cases given the choice by the police of "volunteering" for six months farm labor or of facing trial. Knowing South African justice, many natives sign up for farm work rather than face the possibility of longer sentences. The government has also recently used convict labor to try to break an African stevedores' strike in Port Elizabeth.

Reserved for the natives of South Africa are only most physically trying and menial economic rôles. Any job requiring the least element of skill, technical training or education belongs to the restricted preserve of the lower échelons of the whites in this white-supremacy society. Economic servitude is accompanied by social servitude and discrimination bordering on slavery

for the bulk of the Africans. This situation, which has prevailed in South Africa since the white man landed, is today being formalized on the law-books. Not only is the government attempting to hold the lid on the Africans' progress but it is further reducing their social status and living standards—this at a time when the rumblings of discontent are becoming audible all over Africa. Under the banner of *apartheid* (literally, "separateness") the extremist section of the white population is determined to keep every privilege of society, even the smallest, in their own hands. In the words of Premier Strijdom: "Our view is that in every sphere the European must retain the right to rule the country and keep it a white man's country". Disrupting economic life, trampling on legality, the Nationalists are driving through their policies of corraling the blacks. The opposition United Party, dominated by British South African interests, does not in principle oppose the government's onslaught on the natives. They would proceed more moderately because the efficient running of their business is at stake. Thus when C. B. Swart introduced in Parliament his whipping bill proposing flogging for certain offences, the opposition deputies urged that the number of lashes be reduced from 15 to 10. Swart replied, "What are five lashes among friends?" By the way, flogging has been statutory in the Union for crimes such as housebreaking; but recent innovations have introduced flogging as possible punishment for anyone merely *protesting* against the segregation laws! Swart announced that in 1952 natives were treated to 49,111 strokes of the cat-o'-nine-tails. There are however many people among the white population who abhor the methods of the Nationalists and have raised an outcry against their flagrant policies. For example, when the government attempted to disenfranchise some 48,000 mulatto coloreds who alone among the natives are allowed to elect 3 white deputies to Parliament, public pressure and the courts for a time prevented its application.

The following facts give some idea of the infamous laws weighing down on the natives: The Pass Laws, South Africa's version of the internal passport system, effectively regiments the natives' freedom of movement. For example, a native in Johannesburg must have on his person numerous passes or face arrest. He must have a job pass which entitles him to be in the city. If it is night-time, he must have a night pass. If he comes from another section of the country, he must show a travel pass. He must always carry a head tax pass showing that he has paid the state £1, if he is single, or £3, if he is married, presumably for breathing in the same air as the *herrenvolk*. If he is unemployed and looking for work, he must have a special one-week pass which must be renewed at the Pass Building each week. If for some reason the official refuses to renew his pass, he is endorsed out of the city and must leave. Sometimes this pass system becomes so cumbersome even for the masters that there is a special pass certifying that the bearer need not carry all the other passes. Government figures list arrest on the pass laws alone in one recent year to have come to over 968,000, which is 10 % of the total black population of the Union. It should be noted that a native can be imprisoned for 3 months before charges are brought. Thus chained by the pass system, the natives have received a new barrage of blows from the government in recent years. Let us look at some of the new laws.

The Group Areas Act of 1950 provides for complete residential segregation where people of one racial group will not be allowed to own or occupy property in another group's area. This specific application of *apartheid* gives the government the power to destroy any native community or grouping if it wishes the territory for the white man's domain. The first community uprooted

under this law was Sophiatown, with a population of 60,000. Sophiatown was a settled Negro suburb close to Johannesburg. In February, 1955, the people were given 10 hours' notice and then transported with their belongings in police-guarded vans to new quarters 12 miles from the city. In one stroke the government cleared Sophiatown for white settlement and destroyed one of the few native urban communities with roots and leadership possibilities.

The Bantu Education Act of 1953 gives the government complete control over native education forcing any private or mission school to adhere to government directives on curriculum and approach, or close down. On the University level the new university *apartheid* Bill proposes to send the pitifully few hundred black students who have managed to reach the university level to separate kitchen colleges, as they are called, where vocations and manual trades will be stressed. The Minister of Native Affairs is to have complete jurisdiction over these colleges.

The Industrial Conciliation Act of 1954 gives the Minister of Labor power to determine what occupations the members of any race may engage in. The Immorality Amendment Act of 1950 makes illegal any sexual relationships across the color line. In the political field the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950 makes the Minister of Justice the sole judge of whether a person is a Communist or not. Once "named" by Swart as a Communist, the individual cannot hold a position in the government or in trade unions. At present, 151 African leaders, and a white Member of Parliament, are being prosecuted under this law. There is, needless to say, censorship of publications by the government. The newest Bill in parliament would outlaw all meetings in white areas that do not specifically exclude Africans. Protests against this Bill have come particularly from the Anglican churchmen who threaten to disobey the law if it is passed.

One can see in this country where the natives outnumber the whites 4 to 1 all the elements of a social explosion which could rock all of black Africa. Against this background the bus boycott of Johannesburg was enacted in a show of defiance such as the Nationalist government had never seen before. It is against this background that the victory of the boycotters assumes tremendous significance. Early in March the businessmen of the city, desperate for their laborers, came before the boycotters' mass meeting and offered to reimburse them if they would ride the buses at the higher fare. The people stood their ground and insisted, in the words of Dan Mokoyane, leader of the boycotters, "The people don't want to get a penny back; the people want to ride for fourpence". And the people won. They now buy a fourpenny ticket for their ride and the Johannesburg businessmen pay the bus companies an extra penny for each ticket. The government and the bus companies can boast that they got their fare increase. But everyone in South Africa knows it did not come from the mouths of the Africans who have won a round in their battle with their white masters.

And the rulers of South Africa realize quite well that each round they lose results in the growth in the strength and self-confidence of a movement which threatens to unseat them. Already there is talk in the South African press of dispersing the population of Alexandra, the center of the boycott, following the precedent of Sophiatown. But the precarious balance of a handful of whites, oppressing the black majority, cannot be maintained in South Africa indefinitely. Ultimately, the cause of the *herrenvolk* in South Africa will be lost.

July 7, 1957

William S. Armstrong

## OKINAWA—AMERICAN COLONY

*The following contribution provides valuable material and information which has not been presented in the previous article on the same subject in Issue No. 25—"American Oppression in Okinawa" by Marion Pearl. Since Mr. Armstrong's article was written a widespread movement of resistance to the American occupation of Okinawa and its land policies has crystallized. Pressed by popular dissatisfaction both on the island and in Japan, General Lemnitzer, U.S. Far Eastern Commander, was forced to promise a curtailment of land seizures as well as more compensation to Okinawans whose land was already expropriated. The mood of the Okinawans is further revealed by the recent mayoralty election in Naha, the capital city. Overcoming powerful American opposition, the people of Naha elected Kamejiro Senaga who campaigned with slogans such as, "End U.S. rule of the sabre", "Restoration of Okinawa to Japan the motherland", and "Yankee go home". This mass sentiment, valid wherever expressed since it refuses to accept either the fraudulent Cold War or the excuse of military "defense", is especially justified in the Pacific where United States economic destruction in the Ryukyus is only exceeded by the utter oblivion in the Marshalls.—Eds.*

AT a time when the United States can use every friend it can muster in the Orient, our military command on Okinawa seems bent on destroying what good will was once felt there for the United States. Its methods of administering the island of Okinawa show just the same authoritarianism and zeal for complete control that characterized the Japanese military from 1930-45. Even attempted thought control is hinted at in some of its actions.

Although a *Time* magazine article of November 28, 1949, stated that Okinawa then wanted to become a United States dependency, it becomes apparent that the repressive measures that accompanied the occupation caused an early disillusionment. This was expressed by the educator, Matsugoro Shimabukuro: "The students here are too puzzled to have any fixed hopes. Why bother to graduate from high school if the only job you can get is working on a labor gang for the American Air Force?" Not only were job possibilities limited because of the occupation, but trade was seriously impaired. Okinawans were allowed to trade only through the American Military Government, whose close controls led to the rise of an unsuccessful smuggling of bits and scraps of military equipment. According to a *Life* magazine survey of December 12, 1949, Okinawa's 600,000 natives (the 1955 figure is 660,000) were worse off then than under seventy years of Japanese occupation. In the six months ending September 1949, United States military personnel had murdered 29 natives, raped 18, and robbed or assaulted 49.

Another *Time* magazine article (August 15, 1955) commented on the fuzzy legal situation regarding United States occupation of an area whose inhabitants consider themselves Japanese. However, this article views the occupation as being thrust upon the United States, forcing her into the colonial business with 790,000 "wards". Nonetheless, while the United States recognizes Japan's "residual sovereignty", the Japanese Peace Treaty made Japan promise to



concur if the United States proposed a United Nations trusteeship for Okinawa "with the United States as sole administering authority". Pending such trusteeship, Japan recognized the United States as having full jurisdiction. The *Time* article continues: "The United States military runs Okinawa and makes no bones about it. Even the currency is United States occupation yen, and though the Okinawans are theoretically Japanese citizens, they must travel abroad on a certificate of identity issued by United States authorities".

### Administration

Rene-George Inagaki, writing a series of eight articles for the newspaper *Mainichi* of Tokyo, describes the dominant position of the United States in the administration of Okinawa: "Until 1950, there was outright military rule. After 1950, there was a civilian administration and local government, but both were still under Army control. The military rule is indirect, thus the United States controls fifty-one per cent of the assets of the Bank of the Ryukyus. All loans over two or three million yen require approval of the United States authorities. Since newspapers are dependent to a great extent on bank loans, they must use restraint in editorials".

A simple description of the administrative divisions of the Okinawan government clearly reaffirms Mr. Inagaki's statement. There are three ruling bodies on the island. The first is the Ryukyus Command, the American military command of the island. The American Commanding General, Ryukyus Command, is the deputy governor, while the American Commander-in-Chief, Far East Command, is governor. The second ruling body is the United States Civil Administration Ryukyus (USCAR), whose head is also a military man. USCAR is composed of seven sections headed by American civilians and one section headed by an Army doctor. It is concerned with governmental, economic and social controls, and governs the island by directives. The last ruling body is the Government of the Ryukyus Islands, which follows the USCAR directives from its offices on the lower floors of the USCAR building. The legislature is elected, but its decisions are subject to USCAR veto, while the Chief Executive does not even enjoy this mock privilege, since he is appointed and removed by the Military Governor. The Okinawan people generally feel that the Government of the Ryukyus is nothing but the tool of USCAR. There is evidence that this opinion is shared by some of the American civilian personnel.

### The Land Problem

Okinawa is sixty-seven miles long and only ten miles wide at its widest point, the average width being three miles. The interior is hilly and broken up, with the result that the only flat land is a narrow strip along the coast or in isolated interior valleys. Of the island's land surface, twenty-five percent was under intense cultivation in 1939. A total of 147,375 cultivated acres were divided into 15,494 acres of irrigated land and 131,881 of dry-farming land. In 1940, the population was given as 454 persons to the square mile. However, by 1955, United States personnel occupied 12.7 % of the total land area and 17 % of the total arable land. A Ryukyus Islands' population of 790,000 of which 660,000 live on Okinawa, was forced to accommodate this encroachment which displaced 50,000 families, giving a population density, in 1955, of 1700 persons to the square mile.

The use of arable land for military installations began early in the occupation—the reason given that it was the only suitable land—thereby further injuring an economy ruined by the 1945 fighting. The military now wants to increase its land holdings of 42,000 acres to 52,900 acres, or from 17 % to 23 % of the

total arable land. It wants, also, to use 30,000 acres of land formerly owned by the Japanese Government. If approved, this will bring the total amount of land held by the military to 82,900 acres, or about one quarter of the land surface of the island. This will include land now given over to afforestation, and will thus remove the livelihood of some 20,000 village people depending on wood and other forest products.

The effects of these policies on one district in Southern Okinawa is as follows: from 0.42 acres of land under cultivation by a household, a decrease to 0.07 (the prewar figure was 1.6); and a decrease in employment from 93 % to 64 %. In 1955, of a population of 660,000, only 51,000 were employed by United States military establishments, of which 10,000 were construction workers employed by private agencies under U.S. contract. Average incomes declined from \$523.20 a year, to \$331.73 a year. The military reports will show that some land has been returned to its owners, but the reports neglect to mention that the land is no longer fit for use, since it has been ruined by oil dumping, flooding by seawater, quarrying, or being covered with sand and/or gravel.

One of the immediate effects of the land expropriation is unemployment. Hardly any of the dispossessed farmers used their land for any other purpose than to furnish food for their families. Now the Army has taken their land and will not pay them rent for it, so that the ex-farmer is forced to seek work elsewhere. Since the island has no industries of importance, and virtually no natural resources, the only place to work is for the U.S. Armed Forces, or for some private contractor. The island economy simply cannot absorb 50,000 dispossessed families and the military has been exceedingly slow to permit people to emigrate to other countries. Some attempt has been made to relocate farm families on Yaeyama Island at the southernmost end of the Ryukyus Islands, but the area is malarial, there are few towns, and the entire island is extremely primitive.

W. P. Suttles, one of a team of social scientists who made a study of the island at the request of the Department of Defense, has collaborated in the writing of Report Number 8, *Post-War Okinawa*, one of a continuing series of reports on Scientific Investigations of the Ryukyus Islands. In what is an obviously watered down statement of conditions, Dr. Suttles says: "... some Okinawans feel that land has been unnecessarily diverted from its vital agricultural use. One example is the unused airfield next to the village of Kitazato; another would be the Awase Meadows Golf Course. The resentment felt about the loss of land is re-enforced by the important cultural theme . . . one must not interfere with the livelihood of another. The Army, by taking land and not paying adequately for it, has interfered with the livelihood of the farmers." The Army has maintained frequently that it is taking only as much land as is necessary. Yet besides the golf course cited by Dr. Suttles, pictures show housing developments with large expanses of grass, winding roads, and gardens—all very reminiscent of some suburban tract in the United States where land is not at a premium. The military has also expropriated land on the basis of possible future requirement.

The results of this apparently ruthless land diversion and the extremely limited economic opportunities produced by the occupation are indicated (although in understatement) by W. P. Lebra, in an earlier section of the previously mentioned report on post-war Okinawa. "The villagers (of Kitazato) are in a low state of morale, and they frequently express the opinion that their situation is hopeless. The young people see no future in remaining in the village and are anxious to leave as soon as they are able. Older adults cannot conceive of



leaving the village yet they are depressed by their circumstances. A number of the middle-aged men remarked that it was too late for them to learn another occupation even if they could get away. The older people particularly mourn the loss of their village: 'Our village was beautiful and we loved it' and 'Our land is hopeless now; we cry in our minds just to look at it.' All age groups were heard to express statements such as: 'each year things get worse', and 'we are slowly starving to death.'

The report continues: "The head of the local agricultural office believes that the village should be brought together again as a single community on the site of the old village near the airfield and that they should be given permission to farm the unused land contiguous to the field. In this way, he feels, they might be able to pull themselves together and start rebuilding anew. He is worried that the people will become slothful, and he is of the opinion that the people cannot continue much longer in their present state."

### Rental

The Army has asked Congress to appropriate \$30,500,000 to make a lump sum payment to owners for the indefinite use of the land. The plan was to "buy" the land though the owners would retain nominal ownership and recover possession when the military forces leave. It was hoped that the payment would provide the farmers with money to make a new start on substitute land or in some other enterprise. The Ryukyuan Government opposed the plan on the grounds that the recipients of the money might squander it unprofitably and be reduced to misery. The Army replied that this was not a matter of which the Army could take cognizance. Chief Executive Higa made a direct appeal to the United States Congress and the plan was tabled pending a report by an investigating committee. Representative Melvin Price (Democrat, Illinois), with a seven man committee, visited the island for three days in October, 1955, and on completion of the investigation stated that "there is room for adjustment".

The main complaint on the part of the Okinawans has been the rental paid up to the present time, which was computed on an unrealistic basis and as a result was too low when compared to market standards. The method of computation was to pay six per cent of the registered land value. The landowners and the Ryukyuan Government insist that the registered land value is a token value, usually amounting to only one-third of the actual value. The 50,000 dispossessed land owners have asked for rentals totalling \$7,654,207 a year. This tremendous disparity in values is illustrated in the case of a school which was forced to relocate to make room for the Army. The Army paid 19,000 Yen for the land, while the Ryukyuan Government has had to pay 400,000 Yen for a new site.

The computation of rent is explained by Otis Bell, writing in the *Christian Century* of January 20, 1954. The land is appraised by the U.S. Army's Okinawa Engineer District, and six per cent of the appraisal figure is offered as rent. The owners object to the appraisal methods, particularly because there are no Okinawans on the committee. The Army's Okinawan Engineer District says that Okinawans are not needed on the Committee, since the land will be used by the United States, and since the prices demanded by the Okinawans are too high. Despite these arrangements, only one payment had been made up to January 20, 1954. This was for use of the land from July 1, 1950 to April 28, 1952, the date of the Peace Treaty with Japan. This payment was not made in pursuance of any past, present or future price, but appears to have been in the nature of a gift. Since April 28, 1952, the Army has used the land *without any payment*. The Ryukyuan Government has given up trying to get leases since August 12,

1953, on the grounds that it has been impossible to reach an understanding with the Army.

However, figures furnished by USCAR show that 76,000 landowners and 200,000 parcels of land are involved in Army use. Less than two per cent of these owners agree to the rental procedures; ninety-eight percent do not feel that they are being properly treated.

Land formerly owned by the Japanese Government is leased free to the United States and the Government of the Ryukyus, but an individual must pay a fee to an Army custodian. Ninety-six per cent of these leases are paid up despite high prices. The custodian accounts for the high percentage of paid up leases on grounds of reasonable prices, regular collections by a field agent, and the implied promise that the land may some day be purchased by the lessor.

### Education

Schools on the island were almost totally destroyed in the 1945 fighting. By 1949, only limited rebuilding had taken place, usually undertaken by individual villages, without American aid. The usual building materials were salvaged Army canvas and wood, and as late as 1952 many schools still had grass roofs and were being built of canvas and 2 x 4 timbers. School equipment was virtually non-existent. In 1949, the head of the Information and Education Section of the Military Government was accepting donations from private individuals toward the purchase of school supplies so that children might learn to write on paper rather than on the dirt floors of their "classrooms".

In 1955, the Government of the Ryukyus was spending thirty per cent of its 1,800 million Yen budget on education. A building program was started in 1954 (nine years after the end of the war) with a United States grant of 186,475,000 Yen. The same amount was given in 1955. The reasons for this sudden attention to education are further revealing of U.S. policy. The program was supposedly started because the president of the Japan Teachers' Association took pictures of the squalid schools and went to Japan to solicit aid. The pictures were printed in Japanese publications over such captions as, "Look at the Pig Stall Schools of Okinawa". A subsequent fund drive netted seventy million Japanese Yen, collected mostly from Japanese school children. USCAR then refused the Japanese fund, and reportedly ordered it returned to the donors (causing much ill-feeling in Japan), because the fund sponsors were "Communist inspired". The Army had meanwhile started its own program, but later used the fund money, which was apparently never returned, to buy school supplies. The United States Embassy in Tokyo informed Washington and the necessary program of school construction was then set in operation.

A brief anecdote illustrates this haphazard method of educational administration. Earl Diffenderfer, Chief of Information and Education USCAR, since 1949, admitted in a 1954 *National Geographic* article that he had been to the north end of the island that year for the first time in his five or more years there. Significantly, he found what was described as "one of the finest schools in the Orient" but no mention was made of the fact that the school had been built by the villagers without any United States aid at all.

Higher education has received some government attention. Since 1949 about 250 young men and women have been sent to the United States for study under GARIOA (Government and Relief in Occupied Areas) funds. They have been distributed among many schools in the United States so that they could "get a cross section" of the country. The method of choosing schools appears to be arbitrary. Besides those students sent to the United States, about 425 students

have been sent to Japan to study on United States subsidy. However, on their return from either country, these students have usually been given poor jobs and treated as inferiors or "gooks" in military phraseology. Bad feeling is thus created, especially since they were usually treated as equals when students in this country.

### Political Repression

The military method of silencing political dissent is illustrated by USCAR's forcing the resignation of the elected speaker of the Legislature, a Socialist party member, in 1955. USCAR, further, considers all agitation Communist inspired, although Okinawans dispute this. Organized labor also meets with rabid governmental disapproval. No union of the Okinawan employees of the United States forces is recognized, and the *total* union membership for the entire island is given as 1,500. May Day demonstrations are *de facto* banned. In 1955 USCAR compelled heads of major private concerns to sign a letter promising that their employees would not participate in May Day activities. These letters were published in island newspapers. The resentment felt for the Military Police is very great since they are empowered to arrest anybody living on the island. There is also much resentment of the armed Okinawan "security guards" hired by the Army. They are under orders to shoot trespassers and they have followed these orders on occasion.

### Relations with Japan

Okinawans consider themselves basically Japanese. However, Okinawa occupies an extremely confused status in its relations with Japan. The Japanese Government maintains a Liaison Office at Naha, Okinawa, but refuses to call the office a consulate because Japan does not regard Okinawa as foreign territory. However, a Japanese must get an entry permit from USCAR, a Certificate of Identity (which resembles a passport) from the Japanese Government, and must go through customs and immigration on arrival and departure. Japanese on Okinawa must register as aliens and their stays are limited. On the other hand, Okinawans need only permission from USCAR to leave the island and in Japan enjoy Japanese citizenship rights. Unfortunately, Japan is the *only* place where they are regarded as citizens. Since the United States does not admit ownership of the island the Okinawans are not United States citizens; since they travel abroad on an USCAR Certificate of Identity they do not have Japanese passports and hence Japan cannot acknowledge jurisdiction. Okinawans, unless residing in Okinawa or Japan, are very much persons without a country.

The confused status that Okinawa occupies necessarily leaves unsettled the question of citizenship which seems to be tormenting the young people most. Mr. Inagaki cites this comment as having much currency: "What are we? Neither Japanese nor Americans". There is indication of a spiritual vacuum growing among the Okinawan people as a whole, not merely among the young.

Japanese functions are limited to paying pensions to war veterans, relief and subsidies to bereaved families, and investigating war remains. Japanese flags may be flown on January 1, only, and then not over any Ryukyuan Government buildings. Ryukyuan ships fly no flag. Japanese cultural influences are present in the language used on the radio, in the newspapers and in school books, and in the Japanese standard language as taught in schools. Domestic news of Japan receives great attention in Okinawan newspapers. There is also an economic tie since four million dollars worth of commercial goods are purchased from Japan regularly, including motion pictures and publications.

The feeling that Okinawa should return to Japan has had various expressions,

although the slogan "Reversion to Japan", is discouraged by USCAR, because the Okinawan People's Party (an alleged Communist front group) has chosen it as their watchword. The Okinawans are convinced that they will be persecuted if they openly advocate reversion. Although the extent of the desire for reversion depends on age, status in life, and economic status in relation to the United States payroll, even the richest businessmen feel they are Japanese and desire reversion "some day". Despite this desire for return to Japan the present occupation promises to last long. Military personnel have stated frequently that the Army will be on Okinawa "as long as you and I live". Inagaki quoted Chojiyo Oyama, Socialist Masses Party member of the Ryukyuan legislature and Chairman of the government's Special Land Committee, as follows: "We believed that after the Peace Treaty (with Japan), the state of occupation should (sic) be over and human rights as well as the personalities of the people would be highly respected. However, it is our deep impression that the state of occupation is still going on in Okinawa". USCAR officials are apparently making efforts to build a democratic government, but their efforts are hampered by the basic fact that Okinawa is still a United States military base. When asked if it was necessary to teach the Okinawans democracy, Chief Executive Higa replied, "That is an embarrassing question".

An explanation of the meaning of "reversion" is given by Dr. Suttles in the Scientific Report on the Ryukyus Islands cited earlier: "For most reversionists reversion appears to mean simply political reversion, return of the political administration to Japan; the majority of reversionists do not seem to be saying 'Yankee Go Home'; they grant the necessity of military bases on Okinawa both for the military security of the Far East and at present for the economic security of Okinawa.<sup>1</sup> This seems to be the point of view of the Social Mass Party which won nearly half the seats in the last election."

### Conclusion

Suttles, Lebra and Pitts, in the recommendations contained in Scientific Report on the Ryukyus Islands, Number 8, state that two recommendations deserve special attention: "1) the immediate payment of an adequate rental for lands used by U.S. forces, and 2) the granting of funds to raise the salaries of school teachers. The land question and the status of teachers are the two most serious problems that can be lessened by immediate action". They noted that in at least one village, confiscation of land without adequate compensation had caused poverty, malnutrition and possible infanticide, together with widespread anti-American feeling. They recommend that the current building program for schools be continued and that the pay of teachers be raised "at least until it is comparably higher than that of policemen before the war". They state that next to the land question the pay of teachers is the most immediate concern. Teachers are a key group in moulding public opinion and any hostility they feel toward the United States as a result of their lowered status after the war could easily be conveyed to their pupils and to other less-educated groups.

The investigators report a distinct impression that there is a strong tendency toward "empire-building" on the part of some Americans in USCAR who had "no particular qualifications to begin with, but who have been allowed by time

<sup>1</sup> From a *New York Times* article on Okinawa, datelined Tokyo, August 11: "A 'leftist hard core' of 150 visiting Japanese students is said to form the nucleus for current anti-American activities on the island. These take the form of public rallies in which the cry of 'Yankees Go Home!' has been heard almost for the first time since the United States occupied the island in April, 1945."—Ed.

and circumstance to rise in the structure to the point where they are driven by their own insecurity to justify their positions by usurping numerous powers and functions that should be left to the Okinawans". The recommendations record assertions, currently made in Okinawa, that "a) Government of the Ryukyus Islands is too removed from the rural villages to be concerned with them or aware of their problems; b) Government of the Ryukyus is essentially a puppet of USCAR and therefore not to be respected or relied upon by the Okinawan people; c) USCAR has become an unwieldy bureaucratic structure more interested in self-perpetuation than in furthering U.S. policy". There were further charges that Okinawa has not benefited from the new and more democratic Japanese constitution, that Okinawan law is prewar Japanese law. The charge sometimes became more specific: "USCAR is preventing the democratization of Okinawa."

The investigators also state that many of USCAR's personnel are not qualified for their jobs. They do not represent the American people, do not have the special knowledge required for their jobs, or the knowledge of what life is like in the United States since many of them have not lived in the United States for any appreciable length of time since the beginning of World War II. The Scientific Report on the Ryukyus Islands recommends that USCAR personnel be rotated in the same manner that State Department and military personnel are rotated.

It was found that many Okinawans believe that the cost of American housing and resort areas on the island are paid for out of Okinawan taxes. The investigators recommend that this misconception be remedied and that some of the more luxurious aspects of American life be eliminated. They cite particularly Ishikawa Beach, where a portion of one of the most crowded, impoverished and unsanitary towns on the island has been fenced off for American recreation. They state that "The contrast between life on the two sides of the barbed wire must escape only the duller Okinawans and Americans and must surely create ill-will among the Okinawans".

There is also a recommendation that USCAR stop trying to identify reversionism with communism but consider it as springing largely from cultural and racial bonds with Japan. The reversion-communism equation seems to have been made by politically naive persons and can be expected to lead to nothing but the strengthening of communism.

A possible (but partial) solution of this problem would be to remove the Army from its baronial domination of the island. Since it appears that Okinawa is to be considered a key link in our Pacific defense perimeter there is little possibility of outright removal of the Army, but it might be possible to put the Okinawan people and their land under the administration of the State Department thus introducing a buffer between the helpless Okinawans and the arbitrary military rule. Such a step would have the added value of forcing the Army to justify fully any further expropriation of land.

A more likely solution, short of returning sovereignty to Japan, would be to carry through Article 3 of the Japanese Peace Treaty and establish a United Nations trusteeship under which the United Nations would superintend the American administration of the Ryukyus. This would have the added value of being more in keeping with that portion of the Atlantic Charter (which seems to have fallen by the wayside) that renounced hopes for territorial aggrandizement.

To quote Otis Bell in the *Christian Century*: "We won the battle of Okinawa against Japan, but today we are losing the respect of the people. It is the general opinion that the fault lies in the fact that our occupation is still of a military character. . . . A change must take place soon, else we will be occupying a rebellious Okinawa for years to come."

Andrew Maxwell

## HOUSING IN BRITAIN - Some Comments on the New Rent Act.

i)

THE acrimonious debate that, in the Press more than in the House, accompanied the Second Reading of the new Rent Bill (now become law) showed how impossible it is in existing circumstances to reconcile the divergent and mutually antagonistic interests affected by the Government's proposals. Yet, to put the matter in its most striking form, the "housing problem", in its aspects both of quantity and of quality of housing, is wholly artificial, a consequence of the diversion of resources to production which, though more profitable to a minority, is nonetheless in large part sheer waste when considered from the point of view of *human* needs. Elementary arithmetic easily reduces this "problem" to its actual dimensions, whence it is readily apparent that its practical solution is a mere matter of administration, viz. the determination to use the necessary portion of available resources for housing the population of the country adequately.

If one assume that of the fifteen million houses and flats in Britain, a fifth urgently require replacement—the fraction is purely hypothetical and is probably somewhat high—, then it is easily seen that, taking the price on average at £3,000 per dwelling, one could in six years replace three million dilapidated houses at an annual cost of £1,600,000,000 (or roughly the equivalent of the amount cheerfully spent year in, year out, on armaments)—and this at today's grossly inflated prices.

However, even this is not required; for, for the immediate alleviation of the million families at present living in slums, all that is needed in the first instance is that a relatively insignificant amount be spent to make the required number of the enormous office blocks that are now mushrooming up, into flats. If it be objected that those at present living in slums will not be able to pay an "economic" rent for the flats thus provided, the answer obviously is: A Government (whether Labour or Conservative makes no difference) that can subsidise aircraft and other industries to the tune of tens of millions of pounds, and waste hundreds of millions more producing atomic and hydrogen bombs *has* the funds to subsidise a million families *pro tem* so that these may live in decent conditions, if it *wills* to do so. It is merely a matter of deciding which comes first: The profits of socially useless and dangerous industries, or the well-being of human beings.

This initial step having been taken, it will not be difficult to compute the number of additional houses needed year by year, together with the number needing replacement, until within a foreseeable future the "housing problem" has dissolved into the nothingness that it is in fact. Instead, the by-no-means rosy future looks like this (to take only a few striking examples):

... The grand total of the L.C.C. [London County Council] housing list is now 160,000—some 50,000 in the urgent category alone—and having recently announced that only 2,000 can be housed in the next few years, the housing department doubt



whether many people will feel sufficiently optimistic to join the queue. (*Times*, December 12, 1956).

Loughborough Borough Council is to inform the Ministry of Housing and Local Government that because of economic conditions it finds it impossible to proceed with the house building programme, even for slum clearance purposes . . . council house building would come to an end after next summer, though the council has more than 800 registered applications for houses and 220 applications from aged persons for one bed-room dwellings . . . Alderman Dean blamed the rise in interest rates for the decision to stop building. (*Times*, December 19, 1956).

In Birmingham, there is a waiting list of 60,000, and, with house building at the rate of 2,500 per year, it will be (if ever this should actually happen!) 24 years before the last of the applicants is housed!

Examples could be multiplied *ad nauseam*, to yield the result: In this age of unprecedented technological advance, one of the most highly industrialised, potentially most wealthy, countries in the world is incapable of providing even the barest minimum requirement for a decent life—homes for its people!

ii)

About the actual de-control of some 800,000 properties, there is nothing to be said: The removal of state interference from any part of the life of the country is to be unreservedly welcome. Nonetheless, the mere de-control of a small number of properties (4,250,000 remain controlled) by no means betokens the end of state interference—nor indeed would complete de-control do so. For the housing situation is the outcome of Government policy since the war (to go back no earlier than that), and this has not changed fundamentally. By de-controlling the more highly rated property, the Government have done no more than alleviate the lot of certain classes of property-owners who since the war have been unable (not being philanthropists) to keep their properties in good repair, owing to the fact that the pegged rents did not enable them to meet rising building costs, themselves in large measure but a reflection of the fall in the purchasing power of the pound resulting in the main from Government policy. That this move will undoubtedly cause hardship to a considerable number of tenants now renting flats and houses (particularly in London and other large cities) only reinforces the contention that in the absence of more radical changes in the social structure the housing "problem" will not merely remain "insoluble", but will become worse as time goes on.

The Labour Party, as usual trying to cash in on the unpopularity of a Government proposal, put forward a "plan" for what they euphemistically called—"nationalisation" being nowadays a somewhat unpopular word—"municipalisation" of housing. This thoroughly reactionary policy of *increasing* state interference is completely in line with Gaitskell's fraudulent conception of "controlled capitalism"<sup>1</sup> as the panacea for present-day social ills. In effect, it would mean that all people in the country would be subject to the authoritarian, bureaucratic, vexatious and senseless regulations at the moment applicable only to council tenants. It is well-known that tenants of council houses and flats can be evicted after a month's notice without right of appeal; that in a thousand *completely private and personal matters* such as the height of their front hedges, the keeping of pets, the colour of the interior and exterior decoration, council tenants are enmeshed in petty and irksome regulations which at every turn hinder them from doing what they choose

<sup>1</sup> I have examined this more fully in "Gaitskell and the Labour Party", *Contemporary Issues*, No. 27, pp. 239-243.

*in their own homes.* No longer, most assuredly in the case of council estates, is the Englishman's home his castle; on the contrary, it is a "housing unit" which the tenant is permitted to occupy on condition that he conform with the *official* tastes, so well described by Marx as "grey and more grey". Until now, council tenants have, to counterbalance this lack of freedom, had the advantage of paying less rent than they would have paid had they occupied unsubsidised accommodation. However, this advantage is gradually disappearing, as local authorities find it increasingly impossible not to put up rents. It would be a mistake to imagine that this is due to Tory policy alone. The Labour Party is in all essential matters not to be distinguished from the Conservative Party, so that a mere change of Government would alter nothing in the general circumstances that make it inevitable that rents should rise. In effect then the Labour Party, with its proposal for *nationalising* housing (things must be called by their right names if one is to make sense out of what is happening), will make conditions infinitely worse than they are now, for not only will rents rise, but the entire population (with the exception to be sure of privileged bureaucrats) will be deprived of the right to decide in what type of house to live, and, even worse, will have lost all security of tenure. It is needless to say that such conditions, in which individual private property hardly exists any longer, are precisely those in which the miserable, oppressed peoples of Russia and the satellite countries live.<sup>2</sup>

### iii)

If one bears in mind the condition of housing in Britain, the insufficiency of the quantity of houses available, and reflects upon the quality of innumerable houses at present considered fit for human habitation, then the remarks both

<sup>2</sup> Instructive in this connection is the following short report (*Times*, January 12, 1957): "The great bulk of housing tenants did not want to be 'cosseted, buffeted, or directed and generally pushed around', said Mr. W. N. David, ... yesterday at the conference of the Society of Housing Managers in London. Tenants were a cross-section of the community. At conferences like this there was a tendency to regard them as a special species of humanity; that was a mistaken idea."

"Mr. David made his comments after Mr. H. S. Garrard, of Darlington, suggested that legislation should be considered to provide alternatives to notices to quit and orders for possession in the case of difficult tenants."

"Mr. Garrard thought the courts should be given power to order that where a man did not pay his rent it should be deducted from his wages, or, if receiving National Assistance, the Assistance Board should pay the rent directly to the authority...."

Equally interesting and revealing is the following (*Times*, December 11, 1956): "Recommendations that playgrounds should form part of all new housing programmes, and that steps should be taken to enable tenants to continue hobbies and retain their pets so far as possible, are contained in a report on moving from the slums by the housing management sub-committee of the Central Housing Advisory Committee, published to-day."

"The report welcomes the resumption of slum clearance on a large scale by local authorities after an interval of 17 years. [As one can see this resumption is likely to prove of short duration, if the example of Loughborough be taken as an indication of the future! — A.M.] It refers to the element of compulsion in moving the families affected and says that the uprooting would be made easier and pleasanter for all if those who were going to be resettled at a distance from their previous homes were given the fullest information about what was to be done, why it was to be done, and when. [Comment unnecessary! — A.M.]

"It is recognized that old people and families with standards below the average are among the family groups likely to be particularly affected by their changed conditions and surroundings. Needs of individual families should [!] be studied and an attempt [!] made to meet them."

"When allocated a dwelling, old people, especially, should be rehoused near relatives and friends...."

of Mr. Enoch Powell and Mr. Sandys in the House during the debate on the Second Reading will bring into high relief the minority character of capitalist society.

Mr. Enoch Powell, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Local Government, gave it as his opinion that "from the end of 1954 to the end of 1957, when the provisions of this Bill would come into force, it could be calculated with certainty that there would be a net addition of at least 750,000 homes. It followed that the country was within sight of an equation of the overall supply and demand for homes".

Mr. Sandys, the Minister of Housing and Local Government, went somewhat further in saying that, "it is, in my opinion, fair to say that, taking the country as a whole, we are not very far away from the total amount of accommodation which the nation requires".<sup>3</sup>

Referring to Mr. Powell's remarks, Mr. Callaghan, ironically enough a member of the Labour Party, commented that "it was possible to create equality between supply and demand if one chose the appropriate level. He imagined there was equality between supply and demand in Rolls-Royce motor cars. Did the Minister propose to get this equality by allowing rents to skyrocket to Rolls-Royce prices? Was he going to get his equality by smothering, stifling, and suppressing demand? If not, was he then saying that in twelve months' time every family would have a home, and every woman who wanted it would have her own kitchen? That was the way in which they [the Labour Party!—A. M.] saw the equation of supply and demand".

It is all very fine for Mr. Callaghan to ask these questions to which he knows the answers as well as anybody else, since they were given by the Labour Party when in office. To pose now as a champion of adequate housing is but a piece of party-political hypocrisy of which everyone is becoming more sick with every passing day. (How one longs for a Cicero to say, on behalf of the public, "How long, oh! rogues, will you thus abuse our patience?")

The fact of the matter is that the Labour Party had the choice in 1945 whether to make a clean sweep or continue the same, stupid, crassly wasteful system as before (with, of course, certain changes of *form* corresponding to the altered post-war conditions, which only would aggravate the evils already in existence.) They chose the latter and thereby made the solution of the housing difficulties then as now confronting the country impossible. Where was Mr. Callaghan then? He may now play the *ingénue* as much as he likes, but he knows as well as I do that the whole conception of supply and demand in capitalism has in fact never referred to anything but... appropriate *minority* levels. He knows furthermore that the smothering, stifling, and suppressing of demand on the part of the *majority*—either by the so-called "free play" of economic forces (*laissez faire*) or by state compulsion (signal example: Russia)—is of the very essence of capitalism, and has been, is and will remain the *conditio sine qua non* of... profit, whether the individual capitalist's or the state's.

When therefore he now whines piously about the equation of supply and demand as the Labour Party "see" it (their "sight" has perhaps improved since 1945?), it is right to ask:

<sup>3</sup> A pretty little game followed, when Mr. Sandys continued: "Do members opposite deny that? (Opposition cries of 'Yes'.) Are they sure they deny it? (Opposition cries of 'Yes'.) All right. (Laughter.) Those are not my words. They are taken from a speech made in this House by Mr. Aneurin Bevan [ex-Labour Minister of Housing—A.M.]—(Loud Ministerial cheers and laughter)—on November 30, 1953, since when 800,000 more new houses have been built. (Renewed Ministerial cheers.)"

Why, Mr. Callaghan, did you not in the debate refer to the crippling effect of the diversion of enormous sums of money to wasteful production such as armaments (initiated, let us remember, after Korea by the Labour Party!)<sup>4</sup>, and demand that the wealth so squandered be used to make that equality for which you apparently so yearn a reality? In truth, there is no substance to your words since you are equally committed to a policy of which the deplorable housing situation is a *result*.

The Government spokesmen were not so foolish; they carefully qualified their remarks, and thereby gave them a meaning different from the one they appear to have. A little reflection shows that to talk about the "overall" equality of supply and demand is to say nothing startling, since what is omitted is the crucial point of how the supply and demand *coincide in each particular case*. It is only when the supply and demand do in fact so coincide that every *specific* demand for a house is adequately supplied that any meaningful equality can be said to exist. In the same way, it is of no interest to know about the total accommodation that "the nation" requires, since this tells us nothing about the *quality* of this accommodation, or about the way in which it is distributed among the millions of *people* who have as many particular requirements. (These expressions have the same content as the figures of average *per capita* income in a country arrived at by adding grossly unequal individual incomes and dividing the sum by the total numbers.)

In fact all that Messrs. Powell and Sandys really mean is that within the limits set by Government policy and consequent inflated prices, there will be accommodation such that those who can afford to pay for it will have their demand "supplied", while the many more who cannot afford to pay for what they need will have to be content with what they can get. In short, the mixture as before, except that more people will be worse off than heretofore.

iv)

"The purpose of rehousing," write Michael Young and Peter Wilmott in *Family and Kinship in East London*, "is to meet human needs, not as they are judged by others but as people themselves assess their own."

Neither the Government nor the Labour Party can be expected to undertake rehousing in this sense. The overcoming of the present housing situation must await more favourable circumstances when radical changes in society have at last brought the majority in the country to the point of being able to compel a more rational use of resources for the satisfaction of their needs.

30 July, 1957

<sup>4</sup> For reasons of simplicity I restrict myself to the most conspicuous and self-evident example of wasteful production, even though this is in reality but one item in a long catalogue which includes, *inter alia*, also atomic power-stations on which it is planned to spend a fabulous sum in the next decade.

Albert Schweitzer

## A CATASTROPHE THAT MUST BE PREVENTED

SINCE March 1, 1954, hydrogen bombs have been tested, by the Americans at the Pacific island of Bikini in the Marshall group and by the Russians in Siberia. We know that testing of atomic weapons is something quite different from testing of non-atomic ones.

When earlier a new type of giant gun had been tried on the test field the matter ended with the detonation.

After the explosion of a hydrogen bomb that is not the case.

Something remained in the air, namely, an incalculable number of radioactive particles emitting radioactive rays. This was also the case with the uranium bombs which were dropped on Nagasaki and Hiroshima and those with which subsequent tests were made.

However, because these bombs had smaller size and less effect compared with the hydrogen bombs, one hardly paid any attention to this fact.

Since radioactive rays of sufficient amount and strength have harmful effects on the human body, one started discussing if the radiation resulting from the explosions that had already taken place represented a danger which would increase with new explosions.

In the course of the three and a half years that have passed since then representatives of the physical and medical sciences have been studying the problem.

Observations on the existence, distribution, the origin and the nature of radiation have been made. The processes through which the human body is harmfully affected have been analysed.

The material collected, although far from complete, allows us to draw the conclusion that radiation resulting from the explosions which have already taken place represents a danger to the human race, a danger not to be underrated, and that further explosions of atomic bombs will increase this danger to an alarming extent.

This conclusion has repeatedly been expressed especially during the last few months. It has not, however, strange to say, influenced public opinion to the extent that one might have expected. Individuals and peoples have not been excited to give to this danger the attention which it unfortunately deserves. It must be demonstrated and made clear to them.

I raise my voice, together with those of others who have lately felt it their duty to act, in speaking and writing, as warners of the danger.

My age and the sympathy that I have gained for myself through advocating the idea of reverence for life, permit me to hope that my appeal may contribute to the preparing of the way for the insight so urgently needed.

My thanks go to the radio station in Oslo, the city of the Nobel Peace Prize, for making it possible for that which I feel I have to say, to reach far off places.

What is radioactivity?

Radioactivity consists in the occurrence of rays differing from those of light in being invisible and in being able to pass not only through glass but also through thin metal discs and through layers of cell tissue in the human and

animal bodies. Rays of this kind were first discovered in 1895 by the physicist Wilhelm Roentgen, of Munich, and were named after him.

In 1896 the French physicist Henry Becquerel demonstrated that rays of this kind occur in nature. They are emitted from Uranium, an element known since 1786.

In 1898 Pierre Curie and his wife discovered in the mineral pitch-blende, an uranium ore, the strongly radio-active element Radium.

The joy caused by the fact that such rays were at the disposal of humanity was at first unmixed.

It appeared that they influence the relatively rapidly growing and relatively rapidly decaying cells of malignant tumors and sarcomas. If exposed to these rays repeatedly for a longer period, they will be destroyed.

After a time one found, however, that the destruction of cancer cells did not always mean the cure of cancer and that also the normal cells of the body are seriously damaged if exposed to radioactive rays for a longer time.

When Mme. Curie, after having handled uranium ore for four years, finally held the first gramme of radium in her hand there appeared tears in the skin which no treatment could cure. With the years she grew steadily worse from a disease caused by radioactive rays having damaged her bone marrow and through that her blood. In 1934 death put an end to her suffering.

For many years one was not aware of the risk involved in X-rays for those constantly exposed to them and through their operating X-ray apparatus thousands of doctors and nurses have incurred incurable diseases leading to a slow death.

Radioactive rays are material things. Through them the radioactive element constantly and forcefully emits tiny particles of itself.

There are three kinds of radioactive rays. They are named after the three first letters of the Greek alphabet, alpha, beta, gamma. The gamma rays are the hardest ones and have the strongest effect.

The reason why elements emit radioactive rays is that they are in a continuous state of decay. Their radioactivity is the energy liberated little by little.

There are other elements besides uranium and radium which are radioactive, although very little so. To the radiation from the elements in the earth is added the radiation from space, to the extent that it reaches us.

Fortunately the air mass 400 kilometres high surrounding our earth protects us against this radiation. Only a very small fraction of it reaches us. If it hit the earth with full intensity all life would be annihilated.

We are, then, constantly being exposed to radioactive radiation coming from the earth and from space. It is so weak, however, that it does not hurt us. Stronger sources of radiation, as for instance X-ray cameras, and radium, have, as we know, harmful effects if one is exposed to them for some time.

The radioactive rays are, as I said, invisible. How can we tell that they are there and how strong they are?

Thanks to the German physicist Hans Geiger, who died in 1945 as a victim to X-rays, we have an instrument which makes that possible. This instrument is called the Geiger counter and consists of a metal tube containing rarified air.

In it are two metal electrodes between which is a high potential. Radioactive rays from the outside affect the tube and release a discharge between the two electrodes. The stronger the radiation the quicker the discharges follow one another. A small device connected to the tube makes the discharge audible.

The Geiger counter performs a veritable drum roll when the discharges are strong.



There are two kinds of atom bombs: uranium bombs and hydrogen bombs. The effect of an uranium bomb is due to a process liberating energy by fission of uranium. In the hydrogen bomb the liberation of energy is the result of the transformation of hydrogen into helium.

It is interesting to note that this process is the same as that which is taking place in the centre of the sun, supplying it with the self-renewing energy which it is emitting in the form of light and heat.

In principle the effect of both bombs is the same. But according to various estimates the effect of one of the latest hydrogen bombs is 200 times stronger than the one which was dropped on Hiroshima.

To these two bombs has recently been added the cobalt bomb, a kind of super atom bomb. It is a hydrogen bomb surrounded by a layer of cobalt. The effect of this bomb is estimated to be many times stronger than that of hydrogen bombs having been made till now.

The explosion of an atom bomb creates an inconceivably large number of exceedingly small particles of radioactive elements which decay like uranium or radium. Some of these particles decay very quickly, others more slowly, and some of them extraordinarily slowly.

The strongest of these elements cease to exist only 10 seconds after the detonation of the bomb. But in this short time they may have killed a great number of people in a circumference of several miles.

What remains are the less powerful elements. In our time it is with these we have to deal. It is of the danger arising from the radioactive rays emitted by these elements that we must be aware.

Of these elements some exist for hours, some for weeks, or months, or years or millions of years, undergoing continuous decay.

They float in the higher strata of air as clouds or radioactive dust. The heavy particles fall down first. The lighter ones will stay in the air for a longer time or come down with the rain and the snow.

How long it will take before everything carried up in the air by the explosions which have taken place till now has disappeared, no one can say with any certainty. According to some estimates, this will be the case not earlier than thirty or forty years from now.

When I was a boy I witnessed how the dust slung up in the air from the explosion in 1883 of the island of Krakatoa, in the Sunda group, was noticeable for two years afterwards to such an extent that the sunsets were given extraordinary splendour by it.

What we can state with certainty, however, is that the radioactive clouds will constantly be carried by the winds around the globe and that some of the dust, by its own weight, or by being brought down by rain, snow, mist and dew, little by little, will fall down on the hard surface of the earth, into the rivers and into the oceans.

Of what nature are these radioactive elements, particles of which were carried up in the air by the explosion of atom bombs and which are now falling down again?

They are strange variants of the usual non-radioactive elements. They have the same chemical properties, but a different atomic weight. Their names are always accompanied by their atomic weights. The same element can occur in several radioactive variants. Besides Iodine 131, which lives for 16 days only, we have Iodine 129, which lives for 200 million years.

Dangerous elements of this kind are: Phosphorus 32, Calcium 45, Iodine 131, Iron 55, Bismuth 210, Plutonium 239, Cerium 144, Strontium 89,

Caesium 137. If the hydrogen bomb is covered by cobalt, Cobalt 60 must be added to the list.

Particularly dangerous are the elements combining long life with a relatively strong efficient radiation. Among them Strontium 90 takes the first place. It is present in very large amounts in the radioactive dust. Cobalt 60 must also be mentioned as particularly dangerous.

The radioactivity in the air, increased through these elements, will not harm us from the outside, not being strong enough to penetrate the skin. It is another matter with respiration, through which radioactive elements can enter our bodies.

But the danger which has to be stressed above all the others is the one which arises from our drinking radioactive water and our eating radioactive food as a consequence of the increased radioactivity in the air.

Following the explosions of Bikini and Siberia, rain falling over Japan has, from time to time, been so radioactive that the water from it cannot be drunk. And not only there: Reports of radioactive rainfall are coming from all parts of the world where analyses have recently been made.

In several places the water has proved to be so radioactive that it was unfit for drinking.

Well-water becomes radioactive to any considerable extent only after longer periods of heavy rainfall.

Wherever radioactive rainwater is found the soil is also radioactive—and in a higher degree. The soil is made radioactive not only by the downpour, but also from radioactive dust falling on it.

And with the soil the vegetation will also have become radioactive. The radioactive elements deposited in the soil pass into the plants where they are stored.

This is of importance, for as a result of this process it may be the case that we are threatened by a considerable amount of radioactive elements.

The radioactive elements in grass, when eaten by animals whose meat is used for food, will be absorbed and stored in our bodies.

In the case of cows the absorption is effected through our drinking their milk. In that way even small children, to whom they are especially dangerous, run the risk of absorbing radioactive elements.

When we eat cheese and fruit the radioactive elements stored in them are transferred to us.

What this storing of radioactive material implies, is clearly demonstrated by the observations made when, at one occasion, the radioactivity of the river Columbia, in North America, was analysed.

The radioactivity was caused by the atomic plants at Hanford, which produce atomic energy for industrial purposes, and which empty their waste water into the river.

The radioactivity of the river water was insignificant. But the radioactivity of the river plancton was 2,000 times higher, that of the ducks eating the plancton 40,000 times higher, that of the fish 15,000 times higher.

In young swallows fed on insects caught by their parents in the river the radioactivity was 500,000 times higher and in the egg yolks of water birds more than 1,000,000 times higher.

From official and unofficial sources we have been assured, time and time again, that the increase in radioactivity of the air does not exceed the amount which the human body can tolerate without any harmful effects.

This is just evading the problem. Even if not directly affected by the

radioactive material in the air, we are indirectly affected through that which has fallen down, is falling down, and will fall down.

We are absorbing this through radioactive drinking water and through animal and vegetable foodstuffs, to the same extent as radioactive elements are stored in the vegetation of the region in which we live.

Unfortunately for us nature hoards what is falling down from the air.

None of the radioactivity of the air, brought into existence by the exploding of atom bombs, is so unimportant that it may not, in the long run, become a danger to us through increasing the amount of radioactivity stored in our bodies.

What we absorb of radioactivity is not spread evenly in all cellular tissue. It is deposited in certain parts of our body, particularly in the bone tissue and also in the spleen and in the liver. From those sources the organs which are especially sensitive to it are exposed to radiation. What the radiation lacks in strength is compensated for by time. It works day and night without interruption.

How does radiation affect the cells of an organ?

Through being ionised, that is to say, electrically charged. This change means that the chemical processes which make it possible for the cells to do their job in our body, no longer function as they should.

They are no longer able to perform the tasks which are of vital importance to us. We must also bear in mind that a great number of the cells of an organ may degenerate or die as a result of radiation.

What are the diseases caused by internal radiation? The same diseases that are known to be caused by external radiation.

They are mainly serious blood diseases. The cells of the red bone marrow, where the red and the white blood corpuscles are formed, are very sensitive to radioactive rays. It is these corpuscles, found in great numbers in the blood, which makes it possible for it to play such an important part.

If the cells in the bone marrow are damaged by radiation they will produce too few, or abnormal, degenerating blood corpuscles. Both cases lead to blood diseases and, most often, to death. These were the diseases that killed the victims of X-rays and radium rays.

It was one of these diseases that attacked the Japanese fishermen who were surprised in their vessel by radioactive ashes falling down 240 miles from Bikini after the explosion of an hydrogen bomb. Being strong and relatively mildly affected, they were all, with one exception, saved through continuous blood transfusions.

In the cases cited the radiation came from outside. It is unfortunately very probable that internal radiation affecting the bone marrow and lasting for years will have the same effect, particularly since the radiation goes from the bone tissue to the bone marrow. As I have said, the radioactive elements are by preference stored in the bone tissue.

Not our own health only is threatened by internal radiation, but also that of our descendants. The fact is that the cells of the reproductive organs are particularly vulnerable to radiation, which in this case attacks the nucleus to such an extent that it can be seen under the microscope.

To the profound damage of these cells corresponds a profound damage to our descendants.

It consists in still births and in the births of babies with mental or physical defects.

In this context also we can point to the effects of radiation coming from outside.

It is a fact—even if the statistical material being published in the Press needs checking—that in Nagasaki, during the years following the dropping of the atom bomb, an exceptionally high occurrence of still birth and of deformed children was observed.

To find out how the existing radioactive radiation has affected posterity, comparative studies have been made between the descendants of doctors who have been using X-ray apparatus for years and those doctors who have not.

The material of this study comprises about 3,000 doctors in each group. A noticeable difference was found. Among the descendants of radiologists a per thousand of still births of 1.403 was found, while the per thousand among non-radiologists were 1.222.

In the first group, 6.01 per cent of the children had congenital defects, while only 4.82 per cent in the second.

The number of healthy children in the first group was 80.42 per cent; the number in the other was significantly higher, viz. 83.23 per cent.

It must be remembered that even the weakest of internal radiation can have harmful effects on our descendants.

The total effect of the damage done to descendants of ancestors who have been exposed to radioactive rays will not, in accordance with the laws of genetics, be apparent in the generations coming immediately after us. The full effects will appear only 100 or 200 years later.

As the matter stands we cannot at present cite cases of serious damage done by internal radiation. To the extent that such radiation exists it is not sufficiently strong and has not lasted long enough to have caused the damage in question. We can only conclude from the harmful effects known to be caused by external radiation to those we must expect in the future from internal radiation.

If the effect of the later is not as strong as that of the former, it may become so, through working little by little and without interruption and thus obtain the same effect as the stronger rays coming from the outside. The final result will be the same in both cases.

Their effects are added up.

We must also remember that internal radiation has not, in contrast to that coming from the outside, to penetrate layers of skin, tissues and muscles to hit the organs. It works at close range and without any weakening of its force.

When we realise under what conditions the internal radiation is working, we cease to underrate it.

Even if it is true that, when speaking of the dangers of internal radiation we can point to no actual case, only express our fear, that fear is so solidly founded on facts that it attains the weight of reality in determining our attitude.

We are forced to regard every increase in the existing danger through further creation of radioactive elements by atom bomb explosions as a catastrophe for the human race, a catastrophe that must be prevented under every circumstance.

There can be no question of doing anything else, if only for the reason that we cannot take the responsibility for the consequences it might have for our descendants.

They are threatened by the greatest and most terrible danger.

That radioactive elements created by us are found in nature, is an astounding event in the history of the earth and of the human race.

To fail to consider its importance and its consequences would be a folly for

which humanity would have to pay a terrible price. We are committing this folly in thoughtlessness.

It must not happen that we do not pull ourselves together before it is too late. We must muster the insight, the seriousness and the courage to leave this folly, and face reality.

This is at bottom what the statesmen of the nations producing atom bombs are thinking, too. Through the reports they are receiving they are sufficiently informed to form their own judgment, and we must also assume that they are alive to their responsibility.

At any rate, America and Russia and Britain are telling one another again and again that they want nothing better than to reach an agreement to end the testing of atomic weapons. At the same time, however, they declare that they cannot stop the tests as long as there is no such agreement.

Why do they not come to an agreement? The real reason is that in their own countries there is no public opinion asking for it. Nor is there any such public opinion in other countries, with the exception of Japan.

This opinion has been forced upon the Japanese people because, little by little, they will be hit in a most terrible way by the evil consequences of all the tests.

An agreement of this kind presupposes reliability and trust. There must be guarantees preventing the agreement from being signed by anyone intending to win important tactical advantages foreseen only by him.

Public opinion in all nations concerned must inspire and accept the agreement.

When public opinion has been created in the countries concerned and among all nations, an opinion informed of the dangers involved in going on with the tests and led by the reason which this information imposes, then the statesmen may reach an agreement to stop the experiments.

A public opinion of this kind stands in no need of plebiscites or of forming of committees to express itself. It works through just being there.

The end of further experiments with atom bombs would be like the early sunrises of hope for which suffering humanity is longing.

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Martha Millet

## THE NEW PRIESTS OF POETRY

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON wrote on what captivated him in Whitman—and even more unique it seems today when one looks at contemporary American poetry:

Whitman . . . sees that, if the poet is to be of any help, he must testify to the livableness of life. His poems, he tells us, are to be "hymns of the praise of things". They are to make for a certain high joy in living . . . And he has had no difficulty in introducing his optimism: it fitted readily enough with his system; for the average man is truly a courageous person and truly fond of living.

*The livableness of life.*

*A certain high joy in living.*

Our enshrined élite of poetry do anything but testify to the livableness of living. And if they have an occasional sneaking fondness for life—even they, the non-average—it is swallowed up instantly in their dedicated misanthropy. For they do not believe life is livable; that there is "a certain high joy in living", that man is courageous and worthy. They have built a great stonework of didacticism that "proves" quite the opposite. The joy they experience is of that malevolent kind that finds everywhere evidence of the corruption and sickness in man. They have, indeed, created a theology of man's worthlessness and damnation.

What Whitman, Shelley, all the great spirits who keep stirring us—because akin to us—created, they sneer at as "romanticism". They thereby proclaim themselves "realists", dealers with the facts—and arrive at the *cul de sac* of announcing their task as merely to *describe*.

They would rather be caught dead than *testify* to anything affirmative. And to that refusal they bring the comfort of an arrogant pride.

As carefully swaddled as a mummy must be their system, their philosophy. So they make a virtue of endless codifications of their Book of the Dead.

They reject the idea of the perfectibility of man. (They certainly do not believe People Are Good. Have they not looked within themselves?) They reject the idea of a wholesome meaning in the world, in the relation of man to man or between men and women. They do not believe any of the things fundamental to man's belief and development. In fact, this *not-believing* is the one thing they do vigorously.

The world, as they see it, is composed of chaotic, mutually repellent and destructive *particles*, engaged in miseries not nearly as vivid or compelling as those of the damned in hell. Men are devoid of will, aim or direction. Their only hope of contact with one another is through an agent, a medium, a third party "above", which, of course, is God—a God in their image.

This God of the cult is a doubly-distilled abstraction; he is not akin to the stern, wrathful Yahweh of the desert, and certainly nothing in the least like any of the other gods who have had meaning for men over the ages. What the gods of old had in abundance were *tangibility*, lustiness, passion. They embodied the regenerative principle. The latter is far indeed from the new theology of poetry.



The philosophical head of the priesthood, Hulme, sets down Original Sin as the prime ethical fact. This separates man from divine perfection. To him, romanticism, idealism, liberalism and relativism are "bastard phenomena". For such "absolute values" cannot be in a non-absolute world of men. But the philosopher can announce absolutes acceptable to him: the need for institutions; the need for discipline. What sort of institutions, what sort of discipline, will be intimated.

Flowing from this are the esthetic "theories". The goal is an art at once classical and abstract—classical in the sense of a *copy* of the past, abstract, not in the sense of universal concepts or that which stems from thorough knowledge of the particular, being steeped in it; but supernatural. Such art has as its great aim "accurate, precise and definite description". Since men are doomed to be out of relation to one another and to the physical world, their art can only be fragmented, never becoming part of other things, never growing cohesive as any great work must. Dimension is also lacking as a result: The unreal horizons and rigidly draped, cold, limp watches of Dali—"The Persistence of Memory"—give us anything but a sense of time (which must move to be time); a feeling of possibilities (the horizon is like a void untenanted by even the drift of a cloud), give us anything but memory, which can only come about through engagement in the world, relating to real men—others. These painfully lonely, voiceless dead images can only stare; but at what, they know not. Besides, there is nothing to stare at. This serves as a picturized type of the abstract which is merely descriptive, definite, "precise".

God is in this, as in all the elaborations of the new monasticism. Since man is nothing to man or to the world, except through the "divine", the prescribed art will reflect, not a "happy pantheistic relation between man and the outside world", but "a desire to create a certain abstract geometrical shape, which, being durable and permanent, shall be a refuge from . . . flux and impermanence".

Eliot, in poetic theory, looks for an *impersonal* medium "in which impressions and experiences combine in peculiar and unexpected ways". But what does he mean? We shall return to the peculiar quality of this impersonality later.

Eliot sees the poet's function as unmotivated and mechanical:

The poet makes poetry, the metaphysician makes metaphysics, the bee makes honey, the spider secretes a filament; you can hardly say that any of these agents believes: he merely does.

The question whether a spider by its spinning may affect the nature of man's thought, emotion, and direction, as an artist does—and as the New Theorists undoubtedly wish to—is not posed by Eliot. But he does absolve the poet from responsibility as a member of mankind—a most important part of the dogma.<sup>1</sup>

Let us hear from the mouths of the worshippers just how this theory is transformed into the poetry long raised up as the model, and quite uniformly imposed on poets through magazines, book publishing, teaching posts, and textbooks for a generation of potential poets.

George Williamson is one of many who sets about painstakingly to introduce us to the beauties of Eliot.<sup>2</sup> But into the poetry as such, Williamson barely

<sup>1</sup> For the clearest summation of the Hulme-Eliot *et al.* theory I am indebted to Charles Feidelson's *Symbolism and American Literature*, Univ. of Chicago Pr., 1953, and have drawn heavily on it.

<sup>2</sup> *A Reader's Guide to T. S. Eliot; a poem by poem analysis*, Noonday Pr., 1955.

delves. As he says, it has already been commented on extensively in books and articles. He proceeds, therefore, directly to the theme or the myth of Eliot's poems, severally and *in toto*. For they are all strung on variations of the one theme.

*The Waste Land*, he says, shows Eliot using a vegetation myth in a fundamentally different way. Of that there can be no doubt, as the author particularizes: "In these myths the appropriate attitude towards the renewal of life, or spring, is one of rejoicing; here it is the reverse . . ."

Every mythology or ritual in the life of man yields up a form of vegetation myth (the proper term would be "fertility myth") that is positive, generative; it celebrates an end toward which all the energies and concentration of the community are brought to bear, and whose favorable outcome is cause for rejoicing—for it is truly a matter of life and death.

Human beings play their rôle in all parts of the fertility drama, from orgy to abstract ritual, from the naked woman pulling the plough over the field at night, to the complex rules surrounding puberty, marriage (or mating), birth, death, and preparation for the hunt. Human propagation is never sinful—except as the fundamental principle of life is seen in reverse.

The people of the *Waste Land* are not made happy by the return of spring, of fruitfulness to the soil; they prefer the barrenness of winter or the dead season.

"Prefer" is the key word here.

On the psychological level, the sex level of the myths, the same attitudes are evident. This reorientation should never be forgotten in the poem; it is indispensable not only to the meaning of the whole but also to the reference of particular parts. For example, it is evident in the general attitude toward water, the life-giving element of the myth; and of course explains the use of water. Where water appears as desirable, it is only in recognition of a terrible need. One is more likely to drown in it as the vital principle than to slake his thirst by its symbolic meaning; hence its connection with both sex and religion . . .

The total import of *The Waste Land* is candidly stated by Williamson:

And death is the ultimate meaning of the *Waste Land* for a people to whom its explanation is only a myth, for whom sex is destructive rather than creative, and in whom the will to believe is frustrated by the fear of life.

As for the growth of the "Sweeney myth": "Of course", writes Williamson, "he is the proper hero for a satiric melodrama based on the perception which Eliot found in Baudelaire—that the sexual act as evil is more dignified, less boring, than as the natural, "life-giving" cheery automatism of the modern world."

What difference is there between this and the theory promulgated by the former collaborator in Simone de Beauvoir's *The Mandarins*: "Art is an attempt at integrating evil. The organized progressives want to suppress evil, and in so doing they're condemning art to death . . . The world they promise us will be dismal indeed."

The "integration of evil" becomes Volange's slogan. Is not Volange the mirror image of the Sweeney-Eliot theory?

As for the minor poems, without seeming to realize what he is conceding, Williamson writes: "One is reminded that Eliot is a writer of reflective lyrics or of lyrics 'sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought', almost never of the song lyric of pure feeling . . ."

We arrive at the *Four Quartets*, wherein the Eliot motif has come full circle, as poetry and as philosophy. "Here", according to Williamson, "the speaker confronts himself in 'the silent funeral', after twenty years spent in 'trying to

learn to use words', largely wasted in different kinds of failure, each a 'raid on the inarticulate' feelings. While the ultimate discoveries have been made, they must be made again and again, and now under unfavorable conditions. 'For us, there is only the trying.'

If further explanation of this lassitude, this all-permeating desire to avoid struggle and learning from life, and to fall back and justify the denial to the point of elevating a system is needed, a footnote supplies it: "One of the unhappy necessities of human experience," Eliot had said in 1930, "is that we have to 'find things out for ourselves'."<sup>3</sup>

Around this world, made in their own image, the new high priests of poetry have mortared their walls of dogma; a world like a House of Usher, perpetually on the brink of dissolution; a world as of Poe's creation, M. Valdemar, a dead man kept galvanically in contact at the will of the hypnotist, a dead man whose flesh falls instantly into putrefaction once the circuit is broken.

Man being the opposite of good, lovable, perfectible, ought to give up pretending he has will, choice, direction. Quite naturally, he cannot act upon the world. It follows that he has no responsibility to the world, to other men.

Man is but one more piece of corruptible stock in the inventory of things a higher power saw fit to put on this earth. He cannot know or get nourishment from others of his kind. He can exist only in spasms, in torment, self-contempt. He can only be cannibalistic.

To reach other men at all (assuming this is desirable and possible), he must find himself in God, unquestioning, blindly accepting. For who is he to presume to question or know? He accepts discipline and submission, for what ends he knows not. He does not even know if there are any ends. Man, then, is like the little child—not the child who goes forth each day, but the child who does not grow up. This belief is in itself an act of volition and the will (which is generally denied, but is readily allowed for the "approved" purpose), so used, has made the choice of regression.

The advantages of this choice are evident. With this purchase of indulgence, a man's obligation to the living world is automatically cancelled. He need concern himself no longer with his own fate or that of others. He leaves both to "stronger", impalpable hands.

<sup>3</sup> The easy cynicism, so inherently a component of the poetic priesthood, does not always make the effort to veil its contempt for people at large or serious followers of poetry in particular. The episode of Eliot's notes for *The Waste Land* is revealing, and especially interesting in the context of a review of Eliot's latest book, *The Cultivation of Christmas Trees*. The review is worth citing in toto:

"This is less a book than a Christmas card. With the help of some singularly uninspiring illustrations, the publishers have contrived to stretch the American edition of T. S. Eliot's first poem since *Four Quartets*—all of 34 lines long—into a book of ten pages. Eliot at Christmastime, as might be expected, is no Dickens. He opens magisterially: 'There are several attitudes towards Christmas'—and proceeds to plead for the child's attitude. He cannot, of course, help noticing the cosmic worm in the plum pudding ('The awareness of death, the consciousness of failure'). But on the whole he is pleasant, his rhymeless phrases are more precisely tooled than Christmas tree ornaments, and the total effect is that of a very small and shaded candle.

"It is not the first time that a poem of Eliot's has been stretched a bit. It also happened with *The Waste Land* (433 lines) and its famous notes (217 lines). In the *Sewanee Review*, Eliot reveals: 'When it came to print *The Waste Land* as a little book . . . it was discovered that the poem was inconveniently short, so I set to work to expand the notes, in order to provide a few more pages of printed matter . . . They became the remarkable exposition of *bogus scholarship* (emphasis added) that is still on view today. I have sometimes thought of getting rid of these notes; but . . . they have had almost greater popularity than the poem itself . . . I regret having sent so many enquirers off on a wild goose chase after Tarot cards and the Holy Grail'." (*Time*, December 17, 1956).

Divine perfection! Contemptible man! It is easy to understand how the doctrine of Original Sin becomes the cornerstone of the "system". This purely negative, dehumanizing philosophy conveniently delimits the responsibility of the poet-priest to the world and to other men.

But the promulgators of the dogma of man's impotence and blessed passivity are far from accepting a passive rôle for themselves. In espousing what they do, in embracing reaction, outspokenly with regard to political institutions and social castes, implicitly with regard to what the mass of mankind ought to do and think, they bring all their casuist sinews to the cause of *laying down laws for others*. What other choice is there for them? The choice of admitting the possibility that men are capable of, indeed, obligated to make their own world; accountable to themselves and others for their actions!

From *The Waste Land* on, this choice has become more and more and more unacceptable to the new intellectual élite. This is not the world as they would have it. So they seek to impose their world, and have to a marked degree, through the posts they occupy and the fanfare they have trumpeted forth concerning themselves. The poet-priests have done this with the clear approval and collaboration of those in the political ruling caste who see its value. They have led many a rank-and-file poet into a blind alley from whence the chance of emerging is at best fifty-fifty. And a rigid pattern has been imposed on modes of intellect other than the poetic. One must consider the long period of time today's élite has had to do this; its continued entrenchment; the virtual removal of other influences from a market-place which has rigorously excluded dissent in every area.

All that is most opposed to American democracy, to common humanity, to the Whitman expression of it—to poetry itself—is part of the "new" worship of an aristocratic ideal of Europe's past, holds brotherly concourse with nostalgia for a bygone American plantation system, for a self-created iconography of dashing white Southern heroes and ethereal white womanhood—the indispensable basis for all of this being slavery.

If man cannot make his own world; if he need not take responsibility for his social acts; if he exists most perfectly in total submission to an unquestioned super-power (so, in the Society of Jesus, the novitiate puts himself into the hands of his superior "as a corpse"), then the possibility of *changing* the world is ruled out. But assuming it cannot be ruled out (and men have a way of moving toward change regardless of such dicta), then change must be actively anathematized, repelled, combatted.

This new world resembles the ancient maps on which the known areas were small and imperfectly depicted, and all the pregnant vastness that lay beyond and about was indicated by a blank and the inscription: "There be monsters". In today's world such cartography can only be put forward with intent to defraud.

Yet Eliot and his confrères make a great point of being particularly sensitive beings—if not to social injustice, at least to *certain* human beings. So sensitive that, as Eliot explains, they have had, to overcome the unusual anguish of their responses to this pain-producing life on earth, to develop the *impersonal* manner in their poetry. They have achieved this so well that their own painful struggles are not at all apparent, and the feelings of those few others who *count* are never hurt in any vital part.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> "The writing that comes out of this world is distinguished by its overwhelming accuracy, its painful attention to detail. Produced out of a morbid fear of emotion, it loses itself in trivia so that it will not have to express emotion. It derives its power

The drone of chronic dyspepsia is not the full blast of passion or its infinite modulations; it is more comfortable and may be taken out into the respectable world without fear of committing an unpardonable act in the drawing room.

They have set themselves the task of *just describing* (fragmenting), and that, *impersonally* (abstraction). They have achieved their goal. But how ludicrous it is for them to become enthusiastic over Marvell and Donne, whom in a large sense they now take as among their progenitors. In spite of the element that Dr. Johnson found unpalatable in the metaphysical poets—their yoking together by force disparate and extremely dissimilar things—they yet had zest, exuberance, explorative eagerness; they were bent on making a *live unity* of the separate elements they delighted in harnessing to their conceits. They were flesh and blood; they gave out a flavor of working upon materials of life to enrich life. They made “voyages of discovery”. Their alleged descendants have no drop of that blood in their veins—that drop which allies Donne with poetry, with Whitman—not with them.

Lacking that glad sense of being *in* life, today's élite of poetry must press more and more for the esthetic as separate, sole, and inevitably, vitiated.

“Whitman,” writes Van Wyck Brooks (*The Times of Melville and Whitman*) “inevitably looked askance at a poetry that emphasized the ‘mere aesthetic’ and separated this special function from all the rest, and he was bound to regard with disdain the ‘male odalisques’ and ‘genteel little creatures’ who stood for American poetry in this later generation.”

We are now a long way from the bards of old, with whom the very nature of poetry remains identified, who stirred up their listeners, smote them to the heart, made them weep, gave them fierce knowledge of tragedy, and hearty laughter; poets whose chords were struck from the palpable stuff of men and their strivings in a world that challenged, yet tested and developed, their powers. They were positively generative, like the gods of most ages with whom people had an everyday relationship. No puppet masters were these gods, no effete abstractions. If these gods did not perform, after the community had done everything likely to assist them, they could be and were threatened, beaten, stoned, ducked in rivers or wells, toppled over for new gods.

The pallid smallness of our minor poets in power is fairly well concealed by the giant shadows they cast. But these shadows are mere lighting effects known to every photographer, stagehand, film technician, and expert in the camera angle. They have themselves contrived these effects with the machinery at the disposal of those in power; and by gentleman's agreement, they enlarge one another's large, dank shadows.

Their shifts and substitutes for the largeness all great poets have are revealed by uneasy assertions that these are not such times as make major poets. On the other hand, there is endless evidence adduced to prove that Eliot (the fountainhead) is nevertheless truly great. What is greatness?

Reviewing Eliot's published plays in *Poetry* (Oct., 1954), Hugh Kenner wrote:

*The Family Reunion*, a work, which like a much overpainted picture, bears on its surface the marks of more effort than anything else published by Eliot, is a rewriting of the long-unfinished Sweeney Agonistes, its scale almost comically expanded. The

from a skilful arrangement of the endless unimportances which make up its parts—scraps of brittle dialogue, bits of carefully contrived scene and setting, little stifled orgasms of dramatic climax . . . Never is there a mischosen word, an inept phrase, a misplaced emphasis. It all has the slick perfection of freshly laid concrete, as if it had all been produced at the same moment by the same machine.” John W. Aldridge, *After the Lost Generation*, McGraw Hill, 1951.

income-level of the characters is raised several brackets, the scene is a country-house instead of a flat, the woman has been drowned in the Atlantic ocean instead of a bathtub, and the Furies have pursued the culprit across Europe instead of through London.

But it wasn't elbow-room the dramatist needed . . .

Such are the epics of the day, and such the bards.

So openly canonized are the leaders of this régime that they may say the most self-revelatory and absurd things and have them licked up like manna.

Allen Tate, who feels a peculiar kinship with Poe and his phantasmagoric world, who longs for the good old days when all that was best in the South flourished—among the plantation aristocracy—is one of those who voted to give the Bollingen Prize to Ezra Pound. In an essay reprinted in his book *The Forlorn Demon* (the demon being Poe), on "Ezra Pound and the Bollingen Prize", he sets forth "my own reasons for voting for *The Pisan Cantos*". His reasons are substantially (the use of this word is not deliberately humorous) as follows:

... the work to which I helped to give the Bollingen Prize is formless, eccentric, and personal. The *Cantos* are now, as I said then [in 1931—M.M.], 'about nothing at all' . . . Mr. Pound is incapable of sustained thought in either prose or verse . . . his anti-Semitism is not disciplined by an awareness of its sinister implications in the real world of men . . . if there is any poetry of our age which may be said to be totally lacking in the historical sense, the sense of how ideas move in history, it is Pound's *Cantos*.

Will Tate perhaps argue that Pound's anti-semitism and lack of historical sense may be considered apart from his poetry? No, for he goes on:

... I have little sympathy with the view that holds that Pound's irresponsible opinions merely lie alongside the poetry, which thus remains uncontaminated. The disagreeable opinions are right in the middle of the poetry. And they have got to be seen for what they are: they are personal, wilful, and unrelated.

But now see the process by which ideas are juggled to become their opposites, the process by which Tate now "explains" his vote for Pound, despite scathing observations of a nature scarcely to be believed:

... Not only the anti-semitism but all the other "insights" remain unassimilated to a coherent form. The assumption of many persons, that a vote for *The Pisan Cantos* was a vote for "formalism" and a vote against "vitality" in poetry, makes no sense at all to me.

There is nothing mysterious about coherent form. It is the presence of an order in a literary work which permits us to understand one part in relation to all the other parts. What should concern us in looking at the *Cantos* is the formal irresponsibility; in looking beyond the work, the possible effects of this irresponsibility upon society . . .

We are now about to behold the lady, who has been sawn in two, miraculously restored, springing up healthy, lively and smiling:

But just as Pound's broadcasts over Radio Rome never influenced anybody in this country, and were chiefly an indignity perpetrated upon himself, I cannot suppose that the anti-Semitism of the *Cantos* will be taken seriously by anybody but liberal intellectuals. Anti-Semites will not "use" it. It is too innocent. I take it seriously in the sense of disliking it, and I cannot "honor the man" for it, as the Fellows of the Library were charged with doing; but I cannot think that it will strengthen anti-Semitism.

I respect differences of opinion on this question, about which I am not well-informed. What I have already said is enough to indicate that my vote for the *Pisan Cantos* was not an easy step to take: I could have voted against it . . .

Nevertheless I voted for him, for the following reason: the health of literature depends upon the health of society, and conversely; there must be constant vigilance for both ends of the process. The specific task of the man of letters is to attend to the health of society *not at large* but through literature—that is, he must be constantly aware of the condition of language in his age. As a result of observing Pound's use of language in the past thirty years I had become convinced that he had done more than any other man to regenerate the language, if not the imaginative forms, of English verse.

I had to face the disagreeable fact that he had done this even in passages of verse in which the opinions expressed ranged from the childish to the detestable . . . —[and so on.]



Setting aside the view of Pound's anti-Semitism, except as an X-Ray of Tate, and examining the purely poetic grounds for the vote, we find that one of the foremost New Critics, a man who exchanges kudos with Eliot on every possible occasion, one of the top people of the imposing new intellectual élite in this country, a poet and a critic, acknowledges he voted a distinguished award to a poet whose work he has just described (and he has been convinced of his description for more than 20 years) as being distinguished by "formal irresponsibility, incoherent form, as being about nothing at all, formless, eccentric and personal, and as containing passages of verse in which the opinions expressed ranged from the childish to the detestable".<sup>5</sup>

Such are the elevated and such the men they elevate. The "integration of evil" is what is offered us in the name of poetry.

<sup>5</sup> Archibald MacLeish, unmercifully attacked by Tate in these essays, both on the question of the poet's responsibility and as a poet, did in time come around to the same position on Pound with somewhat more exuberance and on more curious grounds. MacLeish presents Pound as an archetype of the dissent he feels is so badly needed. Dissent from what and to what end are matters MacLeish does not touch on, even gingerly. The occasion was the publication of *Cantos* 85 to 95. MacLeish's praise seems not at all disconcerted by MacLeish's admissions: "... these poems ... are such a tribute to the spirit of man, and to the art of letters in which that spirit expresses itself, and to the printed book which is the last great weapon of that spirit, as we have not seen in our time ... the poetry is hale and whole and speaks in a man's voice of a man's things to the company of men, living and not yet living.

"... Some of his dissents have been merely strident: his raging at Roosevelt throughout the *Cantos* sounds as though it had been composed by Fulton Lewis Jr., and his attacks on Churchill and Léon Blum are in the vocabulary of the Nazi radio. Some of his dissents, too, are tragic, involving him in positions of hatred and contempt which degrade.

"But what comes clearly out of these new *Cantos* [is] the preoccupation with the idea of order ..." ("In Praise of Dissent", *The New York Times Book Review*, December 16, 1956).

### Lion Under The Throne?

Bonn, October 26.—The Land Government of Bavaria has decided to bring into force a restrictive order which may have serious consequences for freedom of the press. In future any police official will have the right to confiscate any newspaper or periodical if he considers that it contains written matter which is prejudicial to the maintenance of law and order in Bavaria ... Protests against the order have been answered by the chairman of the Bavarian Legal Committee, Dr. Meinzeit, who said that democracy was more important than the freedom of the press. (*Manchester Guardian*, October 27, 1956.)

## CORRESPONDENCE

24 Cunningham Road,  
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Massachusetts.  
7/10/1956

To The Editors of *Contemporary Issues*.

Dear Sirs,

Thank you indeed for the current number of *Contemporary Issues*. I read the articles of Messrs. Hedley and Dutscher with much interest though I'm afraid I cannot now comment on them in detail. They are a hopeful sign, breezes that I wish might become a gale.

It is good to see an attack on the New Critics and their anti-poetry. Nevertheless Mr. Hedley has confused tradition with pseudo-tradition—Pound may bellow like a bull and Eliot bleat like a bishop, but they are neither classical nor traditional.

Mr. Dutscher really has the last word. It is true enough that the reason for obscurantism is lack of tradition. I wish that his sentence, "If a symbol ceases to indicate its referent it ceases to be a symbol", could be engraved over the doors of a number of American graduate schools. Although I am not as sure as he is of the remedy, I know that an age that could take *Finnegan's Wake*, Pound's *Cantos*, Gertrude Stein's "plays", Kafka's sick dream-phantasms, Dylan Thomas's throaty and exuberant froth, the pastiche of *The Waste Land* and surrealism seriously must be far gone indeed. Mr. Dutscher's remarks that purging words of their meaning must ultimately lead to purging them of their beauty. Ultimately it leads to purging words altogether. In the later Pound even the alphabet is on its way out.

With best wishes,  
Yours sincerely,  
Francis Russell

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### Never too Old to Learn

1956: "Premier Guy Mollet said last spring he had never believed in a Soviet military threat to Europe, though belief in such a threat formed the foundation of the North Atlantic alliance." (Harold Callender, in the *New York Times*, December 23, 1956.)

1957: "The President [Eisenhower] and the Prime Minister [Mollet] took occasion to reaffirm the vital importance of the North Atlantic pact as a basic element of free world defense. They noted that free world security requires the maintenance on the Continent of Europe of forces . . . to discourage any aggression against the territories of the NATO countries." (Joint statement issued in Washington at the conclusion of three days of talks between President Eisenhower and Premier Mollet, February 28, 1957.)

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